BBC

May 2015
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goodfood

Middle East

A taste of the tropics

Delicious fruity desserts

WIN!
A culinary trip to **Vietnam**



Kitchen *confidential*

The secrets to a smart, stylish kitchen uncovered in our special feature!

Get your 5-a-day
We show how

The travel issue

A foodie guide to Rome

British beach breaks

How to eat well on hols

James Martin's new ideas for cooking with cheese

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"Flavors that stack up"

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PRINTED BY
Emirates Printing Press LLC, Dubai

PUBLISHED BY
CPI MEDIA GROUP

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Editor's photograph shot at STU WILLIAMSON PHOTOGRAPHY (04-348 8527) | Makeup by CLARINS

Welcome!



I have to confess, I'm something of a clean-freak (borderline OCD, I'm told!), with everything from compulsive hand-washing to rearranging my coffee table books just so, being regular occurrences in my household. But an area where I really struggle – and to be honest, it should be the cleanest part of our homes – is the kitchen. It.just.gets.so.dirty.so.fast!

Admittedly, in most of our homes, with maids on hand for almost everything, it isn't difficult – but the tough corners and persistent grease stains more often than not defeat the strongest of wills. That's why the *25 ways to make your kitchen sparkle feature* in this month's Kitchen Special is a must-read for all homemakers. Full of clever ideas from domestic goddess and British TV personality Aggie Mckenzie, after reading this, I promise you will never look back (at least if you're a fellow Virgo!). The Kitchen Special delves further into domestic diva territory with the *Clever kitchen hacks* feature (p49), where you can find smart tips on how to get more out of your existing kitchen gear. And for those of you who are thinking of redoing your kitchen, we've got design inspiration (*My Kitchen*, p51 and p63) and practical advice (*An expert's guide to kitchen remodelling*, p54) in equal measure.

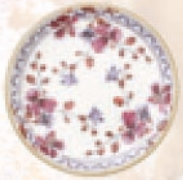
This is also our annual Travel Special issue, as it comes up to summer holiday planning time. We've got travel inspiration galore, from foodie destinations for everyone (Rome, Britain and Turkey), to nutrition advice for holidays (*Stay on track on your travels*, p74), and funky travel gear you'll want to add to your shopping list before you even book that trip (*Travel tech*, p76).

Curl up with a cuppa and this issue, and start dreaming about the holidays – but only after you've scoured your kitchen sink spotless, of course!

Have a magnificent May,

Sudeshna

Editor's picks



This dinnerware is perfect to give the table a summer spin! p11



I swear by these Chef's candles, they really work, p60



Rome was such a wonderful journey of discovery, p78

BBC goodfood Middle East

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goodfood Middle East

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WIN!

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96 Dining vouchers, foodie hampers and cookbooks up for grabs.

Our recipe descriptions

V Suitable for vegetarians
You can freeze it
Not suitable for freezing
Easy Simple recipes even beginners can make
A little effort These require a bit more skill and confidence – such as making pastry
More of a challenge Recipes aimed at experienced cooks
Low fat 12g or less per portion
Low cal 500 calories or less per main.
Superhealthy Low in saturated fat, 5g or less per portion; low in salt, 1.5g or less; and at least one of the following: provides one-third or more of your daily requirement of fibre, iron, calcium, folic acid and/or vitamin C, or counts at least one portion of your recommended 5-a-day fruit and veg.
Good for you Low in saturated fat, low in salt.
Heart healthy Low in saturated fat, with 5g or less, and low in salt, with 1.5g or less, and high in omega-3 fatty acids
1 of 5-a-day The number of portions of fruit and/or veg contained in a serving
Vit C Iron Omega-3 Calcium Folate Fibre
Indicating recipes that are good sources of useful nutrients
GLUTEN FREE Indicates a recipe is free from gluten

Some recipes contain pork & alcohol. These are clearly marked and are for non-Muslims only. Look for these symbols:
P Contains pork
Contains alcohol

Store Directory

Contact numbers for outlets featured in this issue

Harvey Nichols Dubai: 04-4098888
Al Ghandi Electonics: 04-2570007
Crate and Barrel: 04-3990125
ACE Hardware 04-3411906
Forrey and Galland: 04-3398850
Homes R Us: 04-4469820
Lakeland: 04-3236081
Aati Furniture: 04-3377825
Fortnum and Mason: 04-3882627
Tanagra: 04-3411084
Tavola: 04-3402933
The Farm: 04-3925660
Al Huzaifa Furniture: 04-3366646
Villeroy and Boch: 04-3399676

Note: Prices in Qatari Riyals are approximately the same as UAE Dirhams.

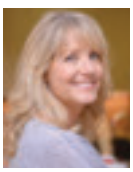
BBC goodfood Middle East

Meet our Editorial Panel

The exclusive group of experts who are part of the *BBC Good Food ME* family:



Uwe Micheel A veteran chef, Uwe has been cooking since he was 12, and in the interim 30 odd years, he has picked up numerous awards, and has been serving as President of the Emirates Culinary Guild since 1999. A member of several international chef's groups, he is one of the UAE's most respected culinary personalities.



Kate Fisher is a highly qualified and experienced nutritionist who has been working in the UK and the Middle East with various hospitals and clinics since the 1980s. A trained microbiologist, and graduate of Nutritional Medicine from University of Surrey, she has, among other things, set up a clinic in Harley Street, and worked with private clinics and food brands, as a nutrition consultant.



Danielle Nierenberg President of Food Tank, a United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization-supported non-profit body focused on sustainable agriculture and food systems, Danielle is a world-renowned expert on food issues, and a widely published and quoted personality. Qualified in Agriculture, Food, and Environment from Tufts University, New York-based Danielle aims to build a global network to promote safe, healthy eating.



Michael Kitts The Director of Culinary Arts at the Emirates Academy of Hospitality Management has hung up his chef's whites, wearing which he had spent over 20 years working at various leading establishments in London and won numerous accolades, to turn mentor and teacher to young aspirants of the hospitality industry in the UAE's leading training centre.



Marta Yanci Founder of bespoke catering company Marta's Kitchen, and more recently, a boutique cafe in JLT, Marta's workshop, Marta is a self-taught chef who took her passion for good food and turned it into a career five years ago. Now a recognised face on the UAE culinary circuit, the former lawyer has appeared on TV in Dubai and her home country, Spain.



Andy Campbell A Scottish celebrity chef who now calls Dubai home, Andy has trained at Westminster College, and previously worked at various restaurants, including Michelin-starred ones, and also ran his own restaurant in London, before moving here to work as a private chef for exclusive events. He currently also consults with Arabian Health Care in Ras al Khaimah.

Menu planner

Whip up a delicious meal with recipes from this issue

Global feast for friends



Snack
Cheddar & sage scones, p48



Starter
Asian pulled chicken salad, p21



Main course
Spaghetti with garlic mushrooms, p27



Deessert
Portugese custard tarts, p30

Behind the scenes

Take a look at what the ***BBC Good Food ME*** team members got up to this month!



Photographer Charls gets snap-happy!

Assistant editor Nicola hosting her last event for the mag!

Senior editor Sudeshna judged the Austrade Australia Unlimited cooking competition alongside Uwe Micheel and Tarek Ibrahim


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Every Friday we're offering our new Sparkling Hollywood Package. The star of this culinary show is our chef's hand-picked selection of Delphine signature dishes with a lavish buffet of appetizers and desserts. Through the day our live swing band will play their finest West Coast beats – the perfect accompaniment to your exclusive dining experience.

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Your say

We love to hear from you!

DINNER MADE OVER



I hosted a dinner party last week and wanted to give it a twist, rather than just the same old drab three-course meal. *The Sharing-style party menu* (April 2015) was the perfect solution, and all my friends loved it – it was like eating real comfort food. *BBC Good Food ME* has always been my go-to for inspiration, and I can't wait for the new issue to come out.

Reena Dutta



INSPIRED BY A CHEF

I'm a huge fan of the magazine, and love reading the chef interviews. I'm an amateur cook, and would love to someday undergo proper chef's training and then join a restaurant. Reading about Joe Barza (*A Farewell to Arms – and hello, kitchen!*) was fascinating, and an eye-opener, showing you that you can switch jobs no matter what point you are at your life. I also tried the two delicious recipes, and absolutely loved the Mouhamara with pistachio crust.

Gayle D'sa

SMART WITH SUPERFOOD

I recommended the trendy toppings feature to all my friends. I'm a health fanatic, to the extent where I'm always researching and looking for new superfoods to try and eat. I feel like it has had a dramatic impact on my health, over the years. I used to be lethargic all the time, and didn't know how to get an energy boost, until I read up and did research on eating to boost your energy. I tried the bee pollen over my porridge, and cacao nibs with pudding. The matcha powder is an acquired taste, and I am yet to convert over to it from my trusty green tea, but I'm sure I will be able to over time. Thank you for the wonderful read!

Nancy Yael

RECIPE INSPIRATION



Being an ardent Thai food lover, I especially enjoyed this issue. My mum and I tried out the recipes featured in the Thai specials section over the weekend and they turned out fabulously. I strongly recommend them to all fellow foodies, they also really inspire me to think outside of the box and try new things in the kitchen. I'm looking forward to the next issue of *BBC Good Food ME*!

Stephanie Jones

Win!

The winner of the Star Letter gets a **DHS1,000 SHOPPING VOUCHER FROM TAVOLA**, the leading retailer of European products and essential items for the kitchen. Tavola is a one-stop shop for bake ware, tableware, high quality cookware and premium brands such as Mauviel, Le Creuset, and Zwilling kitchen knives. They have stores in the UAE and Qatar, as well as across the GCC.



Star Letter



DESSERT QUEEN

I have always found it difficult to prepare something sweet for the table at Friday family brunches. Not having an oven restricted me to making cheesecakes only, which was becoming repetitive, not to mention unhealthy. A few days ago, I found your magazine on a friend's coffee table and was enticed by the front cover. Nothing seemed to catch my eye as much as the 'salted caramel and macadamia pralines' did. It required absolutely no baking and secondly, I didn't have to slave away in the kitchen for too long. It was the perfect dessert item to bring to the table. I enjoy cookies, however this seems to be a healthy substitute and a delicious one as well. In the words of my mother, "it is the perfect blend of both sweet and savory, I love it!" You have my family's seal of approval!

Rachel D'Souza

From our social media pages

- Number one @BBCGoodFoodME fan! – *Abbey Urbanski*
- Did you see April's @BBCGoodFoodME? Great family baking piece with @RichardPBurr from #GBBO – *Mo's Cookie Dough*
- We had the pleasure of hosting the @BBCGoodFoodME Food Club Masterclass at Boulevard Kitchen recently! – *Manzil Downtown Dubai*



TALK TO US!

Email us on feedback@bbcgoodfoodme.com with your thoughts and comments, and send us your photos with your copy of BBC Good Food ME!

You can also connect with us on social media! Find us on:

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@bbcgoodfoodmiddleeast

Or, you could write to us at:
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PO Box 13700, Dubai, UAE.

Compiled by SOPHIE MCCARRICK, NICOLA MONTEATH | Photographs SUPPLIED, SHUTTERSTOCK

Foodie file

What's hot and happening in the culinary world, here and around the globe.



Butcha Steakhouse and Grill

DINE IN THE CITY

THREE FAB NEW RESTAURANTS TO CHECK OUT

✳ BoxPark is becoming the hot new culinary hub to dine at. Their latest eatery, Kuai (which means fast in Chinese), is helmed by former Hakkasan and Yuan chef Jason Yang, and features a menu of classic Asian dishes with a twist like black pepper beef, and green tea crepes – all free from MSG. Gluten-free options available too! Call 04-3439906.

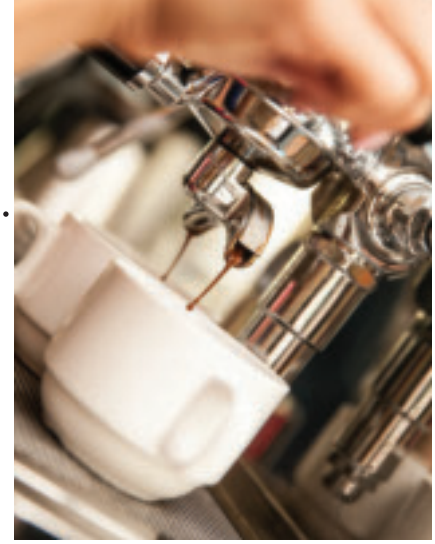
✳ Dine by the seaside at the all-new Cove Beach, Jumeirah Beach Hotel. The chic, beachfront fine-dining destination offers Mediterranean dishes like salmon carpaccio, asparagus risotto, and grilled ribeye, to name just a few, in a stunning setting. Call 800-2683.

✳ Meat lovers are in for a treat with the opening of Butcha Steakhouse and Grill at The Beach. The eatery from Turkey serves dry-aged beef, prime cuts, a mild-flavoured Thracian lamb rack, and sujuk (sausage patties with walnuts and pistachio), among other signature dishes. Call 04-5330684.



SAFER **SHAWARMAS!**

We love shawarmas, but must admit, can get a little put off when we see it being made at cafeterias. Good news is, Unilever Food Solutions and Dubai Municipality have recently launched a campaign to increase the hygiene standards at shawarma joints in Dubai. 4,000 food handlers will be given an education on the importance of managing food and ingredients – specifically eggs, as bacteria multiplies quickly on them if they aren't at the right temperature. All shawarma stands will also have to move indoors, in accordance with the new rules and regulations.



CLICK HERE FOR COFFEE!

Coffee enthusiasts will love the newly launched online store, Give me Coffee, dedicated solely to the beverage and related accessories and gadgets. Those looking to hone their barista skills can find everything from a coffee roaster and grinder, to brewers and accessories. Coffee beans in flavours like Indian monsoon Malabar, Indonesian Mandehling, Papua New Guinean Nebilyer, or Costa Rican Tarrazu, which are sourced from various regions, are also available. www.givemecoffee.ae.

"Food is not rational. Food is culture, habit, craving, and identity."

- American novelist Jonathan Foer

Food lovers

Italians and **South Africans** are the most passionate about food and cooking, according to a study by consumer research firm Gesellschaft für Konsumforschung (GfK).

Compiled by NICOLA MONTEATH | Photograps SUPPLIED, SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

#What's trending

#lionfish

The deadly fish can be poisonous, but according to Twitter posts from Refinery29 website, and National Geographic, we should be eating it! Each lionfish produces up to one million eggs per year, and they are slowly depleting the fish population – by about 70 per cent – as they have no predators in US waters. Slate magazine recently stated that the fish are eating themselves into obesity, which is unfortunate. Since they aren't beneficial to the eco-system, Nat Geo suggests 'Eating them, to beat them' – now you know what to do when you see it on a menu!



Home



This just in:

We are swapping our pots and pans for this sleek, stylish Hook Cookware Casserole set (Dhs2,492) from Dari Home. The range, which includes frying pans, and casserole dishes in two sizes, has stainless steel bottoms and heat-proof handles, and can be used on induction tops, electric-and gas stoves. The best part – each piece has a green hook, which allows you to hang it on a wall. We love!



Sweet Sensation

Patisseries are popping up all over the city, and we are loving it! Mall of the Emirates recently saw the launch of Parisian house, Dalloyau – creators of the world-renowned Opéra cake – where you can try everything from macarons to artisanal chocolate, as well as signature dishes like croque-monsieur with comté cheese (call 04-3350622). Another pastry shop worth visiting is Salé Sucré – an Egyptian brand – at Avenue Mall, Business Bay, serving around 30 varieties of delicious desserts including caramel mousse gateau (salted butter caramel mousse in caramel glaze), profiteroles, éclairs, yum Arabic-inspired sweets and a selection of teas (call 04-5546927).

DID YOU KNOW?

The most researched diet in the world is the **Dukan Diet**! While we rarely support stringent weight loss diets, we know this creation of Piere Dukan has been the holy grail of diets over the last few years, and is still paving the way to healthy weight loss, according to Yahoo data.

SAVE THE DATE

May 14-23

The annual Jumeirah Restaurant Week is back for its spring edition, which brings over 40 restaurants in Dubai and Abu Dhabi together for ten days of special offers. Diners can enjoy three-course set menus at reasonable prices, at restaurants like Pierchic, Pai Thai and The Noodle House at Madinat Jumeirah, Alfie's at Jumeirah Etihad Towers, The Ivy, Iwan at Burj Al Arab, and many more. Menus are offered at four price points, starting from Dhs95 for three courses at casual restaurants. Visit jumeirahrestaurantweek.com.

libero luncho*



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COASTAL ITALIAN

Now there is such a thing as a free lunch! And in Italian it's called "libero luncho". Discover the Positano Saturday Family Lunch with an endless world of delectable pastas, homemade tomato creations drizzled in olive oil and divine desserts smothered in Italian charm. And kids under 12 eat for free.

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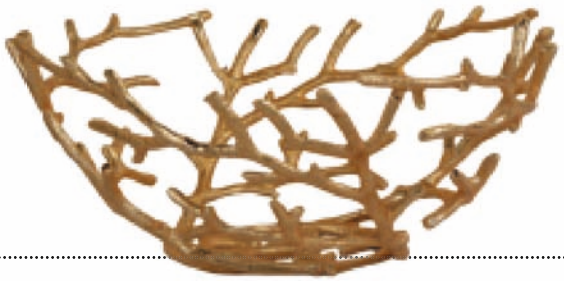
Aisle file

Gorgeous gourmet buys, kitchen gear, home décor and more.



We love this **BREAD AND BUTTER PLATE** (Dh129) from **VILLEROY AND BOCH'S ARTESANO PROVENCAL LAVENDER** collection, which features tableware with floral motifs – perfect for adding a garden-inspired touch to the dining table.

Keep your fruits in style by placing them in this **TWIG BOWL (GOLD)**. Dhs169 at **HOMES R US**.





Give breakfast a five-star finish by serving soft-boiled egg in this elegant **EGG CUP SET**, along with soldiers. Dhs400 at **FORTNUM AND MASON**.



Ditch the branded paper box and place your tissues in this ornate, opulent **JAY STRONGWATER TISSUE BOX**. Price on request, available at **TANAGRA.**

If you like making homemade jams and preserves, this **JAM LABEL KIT** is a no-brainer for your arsenal. Use the 24 paper toppers, sticky labels, and gift tags with strings, to decorate jars and give it to friends. Dhs70 at **LAKELAND**.



This **MICHAEL ARAM GOLDEN ORCHID CAKE SERVER** is something your girlfriends will surely lust after. It's the perfect Dubai-style blingy gift too! Dhs300 at **HARVEY NICHOLS DUBAI**.



Illuminate your space with this chic **KHALID SHAFAR SCENTED CANDLE**, and fill the air with an amber aroma. Dhs600 at **ROOM SERVICE BY SAUCE**.





Making crisp, fresh salad just got a whole lot easier with the **ZYLISS SMART TOUCH SALAD SPINNER**, which allows you to dry your leaves and remove impurities with just a few pump-down actions on the spinner. You can also use the bowl for storage! Dhs180 at **TAVOLA**.



White accessories never go out of style! Use this timeless **HERITAGE ORIENT EXPRESS LEATHER TRAY** to serve coffee and snacks when guests comes over. Dhs1,000 at **AATI**.

Compiled by NICOLA MONTEATH | Photographs SUPPLIED

Here to help

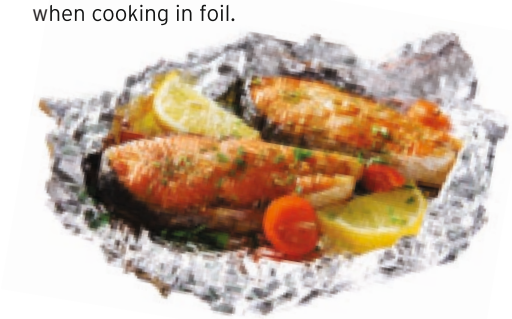
All your culinary and décor questions answered.



Expert chef Marta Yanci, founder of bespoke catering company Marta's Kitchen, addresses your cooking dilemmas.

Q Is cooking in foil a good option. Please suggest tips for doing so?

A. Not many people cook food in foil, but it is actually a really healthy alternative to baking bags, as the steam inside the foil pack helps cook the fish or vegetables – so essentially, it is like steaming. I like adding a little virgin olive oil and citrus (lemon, lime or kumquat juice), when cooking in foil.



Q Could you please give me tips on making the perfect pistachio crust for beef?

A. I like brushing fish or meat with a beaten egg white, before adding the pistachio crust to it. In my opinion, baking is a healthy option, compared to frying, and it ensures the crust stays in place too. If you cook it on a pan or grill, you risk losing half the crust, if it tips over.



Q Whenever I cook butter on the stove, after about five minutes, I notice it turns brown and then black. How do I prevent this from happening?

A. It is important to cook butter at a medium temperature, not too high, and to ensure you add the other ingredients before the butter turns brown. If it turns black, I suggest throwing it out and beginning the process again, so that the burnt butter doesn't stick to the food.

Q I made a cheese filled chicken patty, and noticed that the cheese oozed out when fried, but became hard when grilled. Any suggestions?

A. You should really be able to enjoy the melted cheese and see it oozing out. If you are grilling, do so on medium heat to ensure that the cheese has time to melt, but doesn't become too hard inside. The cheese tends to fall out if you don't seal the patty properly, so in a large meatball, make a hole, and add the cheese, before sealing tightly with a little more of the minced meat.

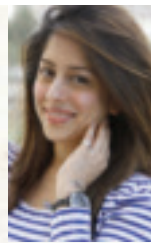


Marta's ingredient of the month

I love blueberries as they are full of Vitamin C and fibre. I use it for baking, and it's lovely with some organic yoghurt and honey. You can also prepare blueberry jam by cooking 500g of blueberries, with 400g brown sugar and the juice of one lemon, stirring occasionally, for 1 hour.

DESIGN Q&A

Interiors expert Pavitra Pujary, founder of interior design firm Pure Coalesce, offers practical home décor advice.



Q I have a small apartment with a tiny kitchen. Could you please give me advice on how to make it appear larger?

A. You can create an illusion of a larger space by using light coloured and reflective surfaces, which can be illuminated well. Lighter colours reflect light, and hence make the space look larger, while darker colours give the illusion of receding walls. I would suggest going for lighter cabinets in a high gloss finish, and possibly a darker countertop and backsplash for contrast. Another option is to use glass tiles or back painted glass, instead of regular ceramic tiles – this gives a seamless look and is also easy to clean. Additionally, you could use glass shutters for the overhead cabinets where you can display your china, and the back of the cabinet could be clad in mirror to add to the illusion of a larger space.

Q I'd like to use an old dresser in my kitchen, but want to give it a makeover. Please tell me how to go about this?

A. A dresser could be a perfect accessory for the kitchen if you have the right place for it. Try adding a pop of colour to the dresser – choose an accent colour such as coral, sea green or bright yellow. If it's a wooden dresser you can spray paint it. The dresser drawers work well for storage of linen and cutlery, while the top of the dresser could be accessorised with candles and personal memorabilia. To maximise the dresser space, you can add shelves at the top to hold your recipe books.



Compiled by NICOLA MONTEATH | Photographs SHUTTERSTOCK

Culina-reads

Reviews of the latest cookbooks, food shows and mobile apps.

On my bookshelf. . .



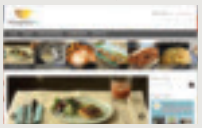
We ask the pros to tell us about the cookbook they can't live without!

Eric Meloche, Executive Chef at The Ritz-Carlton, Dubai

"I don't have a favourite book as such, I admire many, however. I am a particular fan of *Ad hoc at home* (Artisan) by Thomas Keller, it is simple, honest food and includes a formula for success in the kitchen that I share with my team on a regular basis – great product + great execution = great cooking."

Watch this:

www.simplifytv.com



This new online culinary channel offers a fresh take on quick cooking. Ideal for those rushed for time, the videos offer a selection of recipes under categories such as breakfast, lunch, dinner, nibbles, and refreshments, all featured in step-by-step videos (hosted on YouTube), none of them longer than two minutes. Find everything from two-ingredient brownies, to chicken quinoa casserole, bacon jam, and foil pack prawns.

Download this:

Palestine on a plate



Dhs25, available on Apple and Android phones

This new app focusing on Middle Eastern cuisine by London-based food writer Joudie Kalla delves into traditional Palestinian cuisine not just with recipes – categorised under different quirkily named sections such as 'Good morning starters' which covers staples such as foul moudammes and labneh – but also uncovers the heritage, with Joudie's personal memories and recipes passed down to her through the generations with a blog and a picture gallery.

Text SUDESHNA GHOSH | Photographs SUPPLIED, CHARLS TOMAS

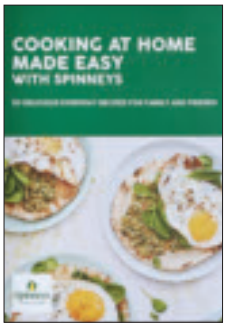
The Bergdorf Goodman cookbook



by Laura Silverman *(Harper Design)*

As any New York insider will have you know, a big part of the Bergdorf Goodman luxury shopping experience is a meal or afternoon tea at the in-house BG restaurant. This book reveals, for the first time, signature recipes from the restaurant, alongside contributions from some of their fashion insider friends, including leading editors, designers and stylists. Sectioned under cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, soups and starters, salads, entrees, and desserts, the recipes range from simple yet luxurious concoctions such as truffled chips and smashed avocado salsa, to more complex dishes such as banh mi and meringue puffs – but by and large, they are all very approachable. Most of them are appropriate for entertaining, and an international flavour is brought in with contributions from people like designer Naeem Khan (Indian), and Thakoon (Thai). Signature dishes from BG's menu make an appearance of course, not least their revered Gotham salad and BG chocolate cake. Accompanied by illustrations by international artist Konstantin Kakanias, the book really brings the hallowed luxury of this well-loved brand to life. Buy it – this happy marriage of style and food is the next best thing to jumping on a plane to NYC!

Dhs140, available at Kinokuniya



Cooking at home made easy with Spinneys

(CPI Media Group)

You've shopped for all your cooking needs at their supermarkets, now find inspiration for what to do with all the ingredients with this, their first cookbook. A compilation of 50 fast, fresh and quick recipes that will work for any occasion, be it weeknight suppers or relaxed entertaining for friends, the book is sure to become any regular cook's go-to. Divided under starters, snacks and sides, mains, and desserts, the recipes are creative, and infused with global flavours – think Middle Eastern sausage rolls and Mango chutney chicken wings – making it ideal for modern, urban kitchens where we all like to experiment with various cuisines. And if the simplicity of the recipes don't make you want to dive in straightaway, the beautiful photography definitely will!

Dhs125, available at select Spinneys outlets



The Carton – a magazine about food culture and the Middle East

(Art and then some)

While described as a magazine, this biannual hard-bound publication is far richer and intricate in content than many books, and really feels and reads like a coffee table book. Published by an independent art collective, this visually delightful magazine is a celebration of design, culture, and photography. The international features in this issue, which is themed around 'Informal sub-cultures', range from a travel piece about a Middle Eastern suburb in Berlin, and where you can find the best shawarma in Paris, to an insight into the habit of chewing 'khat' leaves in Yemen, all accompanied by stunning photography. In fact, the book is largely photo essay-led. This niche publication is the sort of thing that all culture and food lovers are sure to become fans of.

Dhs120, available at select outlets and cafés, online subscriptions from antoineonline.com

Tried & tasted

Each month, we review two of the city's top tables.

Steakhouse



Where: Boa Steakhouse, Eastern Mangroves Promenade

What's it like: Ever since Boa Steakhouse opened, we'd heard whispers of a chic restaurant that has great food, friendly service and beautiful views. So our expectations were high.

Abu Dhabi's branch is the brand's third, after outlets in Santa Monica and Sunset Boulevard. The idea was to modernise the American steakhouse concept – and Boa is definitely modern. Inside, you'll find cream leather and mahogany furniture interrupted by semi-circular silver structures that encase round booths. The long terrace, which features white wicker furniture and burnt orange umbrellas, is great for enjoying the last of the cool nights while looking out over the mangroves.

Although it's theoretically an American steakhouse, the flavours on the menu are quite international. I started with goat's cheese baklava – layers of flaky pastry and creamy cheese topped with chopped pistachios and honey. My guest chose the pan-seared scallops, which came with sweet cauliflower puree and a capsicum couscous. On request, the chef whipped up an al dente asparagus risotto for my main course, which was topped with black truffle shavings – a good sign, that non meat-eaters can also be catered for. My guest's Australian master kobe was a beautifully cooked 225g striploin that was served only with a bulb of roasted garlic and his chosen sauce – Béarnaise. Beware of side portions as they are almost big enough to be considered a meal themselves – but if you can handle it, go for the crab and black truffle gnocchi. And save room for dessert. The s'more 5.0 – a disassembled version of the camping favourite that brought back childhood memories – turned out to be a rich flourless chocolate cake served alongside homemade marshmallow fluff, milk chocolate ice cream and gluten-free graham crackers.

Throughout the meal the staff were friendly and knowledgeable while lounge beats perfectly soundtrack-ed the evening. We now see what the fuss is about – Boa ticks all the boxes.

Best for: Date night

If you want to go: Around Dhs 700 for two, without drinks. Call 02-6411500.

- Rachael Peacock



DUBAI **Where: Le Relais de l'Entrecote, Downtown Dubai**

What's it like: This import from Paris comes has developed something of a legendary reputation around the world with its no-menu approach to food. All you get is a standard offering of its signature steak and chips, with a salad to start with, and a choice of desserts.

Located along the bustling Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid boulevard, with the street-side seating that seems de rigeur here, the restaurant features typical French bistro-style décor inside, with wood-panelled walls, little lamps and vintage art.

On arrival, we were served the starter salad of greens with a mustard dressing and walnuts quite promptly – and it was a pleasant start to the meal. The mains arrived soon after – in fact, the food was brought out even before we had finished our earlier course, but it could just have been an extension of the quintessential European experience that the restaurant embodies, of no-nonsense, fuss-free food with service to match!

Our steaks, when they were served, were delicious however – sliced, doused in their special sauce (I picked up hints of mustard, tarragon and parsley in the flavours), with perfectly crisped chips on the side. The price includes two servings of steak. But, it is at the dessert course that they really shine – this is the only bit they have a menu for, with a wide selection of the classic European-style desserts offer, ranging from profiteroles to crème brulee, and everything in between. I opted for the Relais summer vacherin, a tower of meringue, cream and strawberries that was delicious but too big to finish. My friend's Dame blanche was a similarly decadent concoction that she too had to give up on halfway, but thoroughly enjoyed. This sort of a choice-free approach, while refreshingly different, also means that the quality of the food needs to be unsurpassed. While that may be the case in the Parisian outpost, which regularly has queues at the door, the Dubai venue has yet to get there.

Best for: A relaxed steak dinner at good-value prices

If you want to go: Set menu is Dhs130 (desserts priced separately), call 04- 5530461.

- Sudeshna Ghosh



Photographs SUPPLIED and by REVIEWER



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rotana.com

Flavours of the month

Our pick of the best restaurant offers, promotions and deals this month.



Sheraton Grand Hotel

✳ Sensational seafood

Hotfoot it to Sheraton Grand Hotel for the Simply Seafood night, to kick-start your weekend on the right note. The chef heads over to Deira Seafood market to hand-pick the best produce available, and you can try them in dishes like creamy seafood chowder, spicy shrimp Thai red curry, and Arabic fish kozbreah, among other dishes from the live cooking stations at the widespread buffet.
Thursday, from Dhs210 per person. Call 04-5034444.



✳ Bountiful breakfast

Begin your day with home-cooked Armenian food at Mayrig, Downtown Dubai. The à la carte breakfast menu features a manakeesh basket, eggs with meat, sojouk, and the Mayrig omelette – all made with fresh ingredients, plus traditional tea and coffee.
Friday and Saturday, call 04-4539945.

✳ Japanese-style dinner

Popular lounge Okku has launched a new concept, Geisha House on Thursday evenings, offering a supper club experience of dinner coupled with entertainment. Enjoy sushi and other Japanese specialties, while Geishas make appearances and a DJ spins beats.
À la carte menu, call 04-5018777.

✳ South American treat

Seafood lovers should head to Sayad at Emirate's Palace this month to try a selection of ceviches with a twist. Savour seven types of fish, showcasing seven contintents, doused in coconut milk, sumac and lemongrass, among other options.
Daily, from Dhs90 per dish. Call 02-6907999.

✳ French fantasy

Discover some of Bordeaux's finest wines in a one-night only dinner on May 15, when sommelier Jean-Sebastien Azaïs will present five vintages paired with specialties from the Bordeaux region, at Stay by Yannick Alléno, One&Only The Palm.
Dhs1,250 per person, call 04-4401030.

✳ Flavours from the Far East

If you love curries, noodles, seafood, and Asian flavours, a visit to Pergolas Restaurant, Al Murooj Rotana Dubai, for their Far East Feast is a must. Everything from Thai, and Japanese, to Vietnamese, and Malaysian are on offer, and you can enjoy Schezwan prawns, Peking duck, dim sum, sushi, and food from the live cooking stations.
Daily for dinner, Dhs180 per person.
Call 04-3211111.



Compiled by NICOLA MONTEATH | Photographs SUPPLIED



BBQ feast

Tucked away in an unlikely spot on Sheikh Zayed Road, Absolute Barbecues is a bustling, casual restaurant concept from India that has recently opened its doors in Dubai offering delicious grills at an affordable price, with friendly service. An all-you-can-eat concept, here, an array of starters, from grilled prawns and chicken, to mushrooms and pineapple skewers are brought to the table to be finished off at the mini-grills fitted out on each. Other starters like a more-ish cheesy potatoes are also served, plus more exotic grilled items cooked to order at a central grill. Buffet-style mains and desserts featuring classic Indian dishes are also on offer, but with the endless supply of fast, fresh and delicious barbecue dishes, you may not need them!
Fixed price, from Dhs70 per head. Call 04-5520579.



Eating healthy made easier

Diet delivery service brand Right Bite has opened its first café in JLT, offering their popular healthy dishes conveniently available for dine-in, delivery and takeaway. Right Bite Now's menu includes appetisers, salads, mains and desserts, all accompanied by nutritional information.
À la carte menu, call 04-4219988.

Weekend brunching

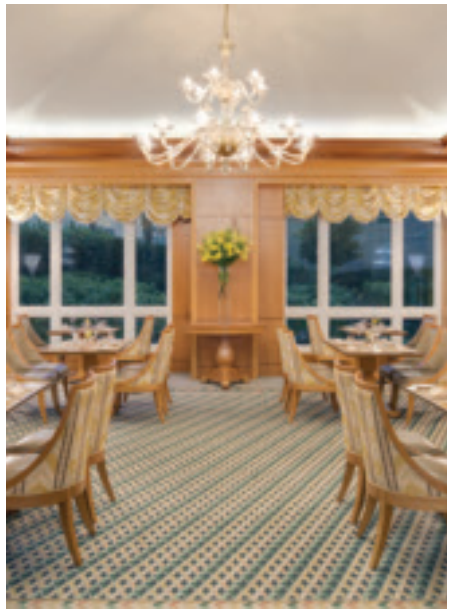
Not up for a Friday brunch? Head to Café Rouge at Souk Madinat Jumeirah, on a Saturday, and tuck into a three-course à la carte menu of French fare. Scrambled eggs, Croque monsieur, Poulet (chicken) escalope, and crème brulee with raspberry sorbet, or a dark chocolate ganache with chocolate ice cream, are some of the dishes to try on the menu.
Saturday, from Dhs150 per person.
Call 04-5546438.

Spring touch

Head to Iris Yas Island to try the new spring-summer menu featuring seasonal ingredients in dishes including red tuna tartare, fresh cannelloni wrapped with avocado. Favourites like the truffle infused mini burger, and rock shrimp tempura are still on offer for diners.
Monday to Saturday, call 055-1605636.



Doha Dining



A special dish

Four Seasons Doha is celebrating its tenth anniversary by showcasing the ultimate Italian dish at Il Teatro. Diners can enjoy Risotto Ai Fruitti Di Mare, which showcases ten ingredients including everything from Canadian lobster, and calamari, to mussels, and red prawns.
Daily for lunch and dinner, QR145 for the dish. Call (+974) 4494 8888.

Imaginative Indian

Celebrity chef Sanjeev Kapoor has opened his first Signature by Sanjeev Kapoor restaurant in Doha at the newly opened Melia Doha in West Bay. Expect creative, avant-garde dishes like Tandoori wasabi lobster and blood orange and ginger kulfi, in an elegant setting.
Call (+974) 401 9999.

Spanish highlights

Meliá Doha is giving Doha residents a taste of Spain with the launch of Aceite. Diners can flock to this lively eatery to feast on tapas-with-a-twist dishes like lobster and octopus salad, garbanzo beans with king prawns, grilled lamb chops, and codfish with homemade tomato and mint sauce.
Call +(974) 401 99999.



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Chilli-stuffed peppers with feta topping, recipe p26

Home Cooking

Inspiring recipes for easy everyday meals and stylish weekend entertaining

IN THIS SECTION



✳ News ways with versatile eggs, **P28**



✳ Escape to the tropics with fruity desserts! **P40**



✳ James Martin's favourite cheese recipes, **P46**

Make it tonight

Fresh, easy ideas for midweek suppers that are good-value too! Recipes EMILY KYDD Photographs ROB STREETER

Spicy turkey sweet potatoes

SERVES 4 **PREP** 5 mins **COOK** 45 mins
EASY LOW FAT LOW CAL FIBRE 2 OF 5 A DAY mince only

4 sweet potatoes
1 tbsp olive oil
1 onion, finely chopped
1 garlic clove, crushed
500g turkey mince
500g carton passata
3 tbsp barbecue sauce
½ tsp cayenne pepper
4 tbsp soured cream
½ pack chives, finely snipped

1 Heat oven to 200C/180C fan. Prick the potatoes, place on a baking tray and bake for 45 mins or until really soft.
2 Meanwhile, heat the oil in a frying pan, add the onion and cook gently for 8 mins until softened. Stir in the garlic, then tip in the mince and stir to break up. Cook over a high heat until any liquid has evaporated and the mince is browned, about 10 mins. Pour in the passata, then fill the carton a quarter full of water and tip that in too. Add the barbecue sauce and cayenne, then lower the heat and simmer gently for 15 mins, adding a little extra water if needed. Taste and season.
3 When the potatoes are soft, split them down the centre and spoon the mince over the top. Add a dollop of soured cream and a sprinkling of chives.

PER SERVING energy 464 kcals • fat 10g • saturates 4g • carbs 58g • sugars 35g • fibre 10g • protein 31g • salt 0.9g



Food styling NATALIE THOMSON



Potato & pesto pizza

SERVES 2 **PREP** 15 mins **COOK** 35 mins
EASY V CALCIUM

200g baby potatoes
145g ciabatta bread mix
1 tsp olive oil, plus extra for greasing
2 tbsp green pesto
125g ball mozzarella, grated
Large handful of rocket

1 Bring a pan of salted water to the boil, drop in the potatoes and simmer for 15 mins or until tender. Drain and leave to cool a little, then slice.
2 Meanwhile, heat oven to 220C/200C fan. Prepare the bread mix following pack instructions. Roll out into a rough circle, about 28cm diameter, then transfer to an oiled baking tray. Set aside for 15 mins.
3 Spread the pesto over the pizza base. Scatter over half the mozzarella. Top with the potatoes and remaining cheese. Drizzle the oil over the potatoes and bake for 15-18 mins or until the crust is golden and the cheese bubbling. Scatter over the rocket and a good grinding of black pepper before serving.

PER SERVING energy 522 kcals • fat 26g • saturates 11g • carbs 49g • sugars 3g • fibre 3g • protein 22g • salt 2.1g



Asian pulled chicken salad

SERVES 5 **PREP** 20 mins **NO COOK**
EASY LOW CAL VIT C 1 OF 5 A DAY GOOD 4 YOU

1 small roasted chicken, about 1kg
½ red cabbage, cored and finely sliced
3 carrots, coarsely grated or finely shredded
5 spring onions, finely sliced on the diagonal
2 red chillies, halved and thinly sliced
Small bunch of coriander, roughly chopped, including stalks
2 heaped tbsp roasted salted peanuts, roughly crushed

FOR THE DRESSING
3½ tbsp hoisin sauce
1½ tbsp toasted sesame oil

1 Combine the dressing ingredients in a small bowl and set aside.
2 Remove all the meat from the chicken, shred into large chunks and pop in a large bowl. Add the cabbage, carrots, spring onions, chillies and half the coriander. Toss together with the dressing and pile onto a serving plate, then scatter over the remaining coriander and peanuts.

PER SERVING energy 352 kcals • fat 19g • saturates 4g • carbs 14g • sugars 11g • fibre 5g • protein 29g • salt 0.8g »



Gingered tofu, aubergine & pea noodles

SERVES 4 **PREP** 10 mins **COOK** 15 mins
EASY V LOW CAL FIBRE 2 OF 5 A DAY

3 tbsp toasted sesame oil
2 aubergines, cut into small chunks
4 nests of medium egg noodles (about 250g)
1 garlic clove
Thumb-sized piece of ginger, grated
2 tsp Chinese five-spice powder
3 tbsp soy sauce
3 tbsp sweet chilli sauce
160g pack marinated tofu pieces
225g frozen peas, defrosted
3 spring onions, shredded

1 Heat a wok over a high heat and add 2 tbsp of the oil. Throw in the aubergine and cook, stirring, for 8-10 mins or until it has browned and softened completely, then season. Meanwhile, cook the noodles following pack instructions.
2 Remove the aubergine from the pan and add the remaining oil. Cook the garlic and ginger for 30 secs, then stir in the five-spice. Spoon in the soy and chilli sauce, stir and bubble for 30 secs.
3 Throw in the tofu, peas and aubergines, and heat through. Add the noodles and toss everything together. Divide between bowls and scatter over the spring onions.
PER SERVING energy 461 kcals • fat 14g • saturates 3g • carbs 59g • sugars 13g • fibre 12g • protein 18g • salt 2.5g

Chorizo, ricotta & spinach pasta bake

SERVES 4 **PREP** 5 mins **COOK** 30 mins
EASY CALCIUM P

400g penne
1 tbsp olive oil
140g small chorizo sausages, diced
180g bag baby spinach
2 garlic cloves, crushed
250g ricotta
2 tbsp milk
Zest of ½ lemon
25g Parmesan, finely grated

1 Heat oven to 200C/180C fan. Bring a large pan of water to the boil and cook the pasta following pack instructions. Drain, reserving 1 tbsp of the cooking water. Meanwhile, heat the oil in a large frying pan, add the chorizo and cook for 3-4 mins until crisp. Throw in the spinach, garlic and some seasoning, and cook until just wilted. Tip into a bowl with the pasta and the reserved 1 tbsp cooking water, then mix well.
2 Mix the ricotta, milk and lemon zest together with some seasoning. Spoon half the pasta into a gratin dish and spoon over half the ricotta mix. Top with the remaining pasta and dollop over spoonfuls of the remaining ricotta. Scatter with the Parmesan and bake for 15 mins until the cheese has melted. Grind over some black pepper before serving.
PER SERVING energy 538 kcals • fat 22g • saturates 9g • carbs 56g • sugars 5g • fibre 1g • protein 27g • salt 1.0g



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Spinneys are dedicated to working with organic suppliers who share our core values of food quality and sustainability. Sunripe, a Kenya-based fruit and vegetable producer, cultivates a range of organic produce – including avocados, Tenderstem broccoli, fine beans, courgettes and baby spinach, leeks and salad onions, among other fresh ingredients that you'll find in store.

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Easy ways to 5-A-DAY

Adding vegetables to your main meal doesn't need to just mean serving peas on the side! Try these simple and tasty ways to reach your daily target and stay in tip top shape.

Buckwheat salad with beetroot, orange & feta

SERVES 6 **PREP** 15 mins **COOK** 15 mins

EASY | V | CALCIUM | FOLATE | FIBRE | VIT C | 2 OF 5 A DAY

600ml vegetable stock or water
280g raw buckwheat, rinsed well
200g pack feta, crumbled
3 oranges, peeled and segmented
110g pack baby leaf spinach or mixed leaves
2 tbsp each sunflower and pumpkin seeds
2 tbsp mint leaves, chopped
2 tbsp parsley leaves, chopped
500g cooked and peeled beetroot, cut into chunks

FOR THE DRESSING
2 tbsp lemon juice
1½ tsp light soft brown sugar
1 tbsp rapeseed oil
2 tbsp white wine vinegar

1 Bring the stock or water to the boil in a pan and add the buckwheat. Bring to the boil again then simmer for 10 mins or until the buckwheat is tender but still retains a bite. Drain thoroughly and cool.

2 Meanwhile, whisk the dressing ingredients together with some seasoning in a large bowl, add all the remaining ingredients, except the buckwheat and beetroot, and toss together. Sprinkle in the buckwheat and beetroot for the final toss. Taste for seasoning, and spoon onto a platter and serve.

PER SERVING energy 449 kcals • fat 15g • saturates 5g • carbs 60g • sugars 20g • fibre 7g • protein 15g • salt 1.8g »



Chilli-stuffed peppers with feta topping

SERVES 2 **PREP** 10 mins **COOK** 25 mins

EASY V LOW FAT LOW CAL CALCIUM FOLATE FIBRE VIT C 4 OF 5 A DAY GLUTEN FREE

2 large peppers, halved, deseeded but stalks left on
1 tsp each ground cumin and coriander
400g can chopped tomatoes
1 red onion, halved and sliced
1 garlic clove, finely grated
1 red chilli, deseeded and finely chopped
1 small aubergine, cut into small cubes
220g canned kidney beans (don't drain them)
Small bunch of coriander, chopped
1 large egg
25g low-fat feta, finely grated
50g low-fat fromage frais
2 handfuls rocket
Lime wedges, to serve

1 Heat oven to 190C/170C fan. Place the pepper halves in a shallow baking dish, skin-side up, and roast for 15-20 mins.
2 Meanwhile, tip the spices into a pan and warm briefly to release their flavour. Tip in the tomatoes and stir in the onion, garlic, chilli, aubergine and kidney beans with their juice. Cover the pan and cook for 20 mins, stirring occasionally. Try not to add any extra liquid; the mixture should be quite dry. Stir in the coriander.
3 Meanwhile, beat the egg with the feta and fromage frais. Turn the peppers over and pile the aubergine mixture into each one, packing it down as much as you can. Top with the feta mixture and return to the oven for 10 mins more until the topping has lightly set. Don't worry if some of it flows off, as it will just set in the dish. Serve the peppers on the rocket with lime wedges for squeezing over.

PER SERVING energy 288 kcals • fat 7g • saturates 3g • carbs 39g • sugars 26g • fibre 15g • protein 19g • salt 1.3g



Pancetta & pepper piperade

SERVES 4 **PREP** 10 mins **COOK** 30 mins

EASY VIT C 3 OF 5 A DAY GLUTEN FREE P

140g pancetta pieces (or turkey bacon)
1 red onion, finely chopped
3 peppers, 1 each of green, red and yellow, deseeded and finely diced
400g can chopped tomatoes
2 tbsp tomato purée
4 medium eggs
Small handful of basil leaves, shredded
Crusty bread, to serve (optional)

1 Put the pancetta and onion in a large, deep frying pan. Cook for 7 mins until the onion is beginning to soften.
2 Add the peppers, tomatoes and tomato purée to the pan and mix well. Season, cover and cook for 10-15 mins.
3 Make 4 small wells in the mixture. Crack an egg into each well and cook for a further 5-6 mins or until the eggs have set. Scatter with basil and serve straight away, with crusty bread, if you like.

PER SERVING energy 259 kcals • fat 15g • saturates 5g • carbs 13g • sugars 12g • fibre 5g • protein 15g • salt 1.3g

TIP **Whip up this recipe, without the eggs, for a speedy homemade sauce to serve with pasta.**



Spaghetti with garlic mushrooms & prosciutto

SERVES 4 **PREP** 15 mins **COOK** 20 mins
EASY | LOW CAL | FOLATE | 2 OF 5 A DAY | P

90g prosciutto
1 tsp rapeseed oil
2 red onions, halved and thinly sliced
6 garlic cloves, chopped
175g wholewheat spaghetti
400g flat mushrooms, chopped
1 tbsp tarragon or thyme leaves, chopped
25g walnut pieces
2 good handfuls of parsley, chopped

1 Heat a large non-stick frying pan and dry-fry the prosciutto in batches until crisp. Set aside. Add the oil to the pan with the onions and garlic. Cook until the onion and garlic soften and start to turn golden.
2 Boil the spaghetti, following pack instructions. Meanwhile, pile the mushrooms into the pan with the onions and cook, stirring frequently, until they reduce and start to colour. Add the tarragon or thyme and the walnuts, and cook for a few mins more.
3 Drain the spaghetti, reserving a little water. Toss the spaghetti with the garlic mushrooms and parsley and, if the mix looks a little dry, splash in a small amount of the cooking water to moisten it. Slice or tear the crispy prosciutto and toss through before serving.

PER SERVING energy 322 kcals • fat 9g • saturates 2g • carbs 39g • sugars 4g • fibre 3g • protein 19g • salt 1.2g



Low-cal comfort food

Smoked mackerel & harissa salad

SERVES 4 **PREP** 15 mins **NO COOK**
EASY | FOLATE | VIT C | OMEGA-3 | 2 OF 5 A DAY

5 tbsp crème fraîche
1 heaped tbsp harissa
Juice of ½ lemon
750g cooked potatoes
3 large tomatoes, deseeded and diced
1 red onion, diced
300g smoked mackerel, flaked
2-3 good handfuls rocket leaves

1 Mix the crème fraîche, harissa and lemon juice, then season to taste.
2 In a large bowl, toss together the potatoes, tomatoes and onion, then stir in the dressing to coat. Scatter with the flaked mackerel and rocket. Stir everything together before serving.

PER SERVING energy 546 kcals • fat 34g • saturates 12g • carbs 40g • sugars 8g • fibre 5g • protein 20g • salt 1.6g B1

TIP This dish is a handy packed lunch – if taking to work, layer the mackerel and rocket on top of the potatoes, then stir in when ready to eat.



Good eggs

Give a starring role to one of the most versatile ingredients in your kitchen – these recipes show how eggs can be so much more than a breakfast staple!

Recipes MIRIAM NICE Photographs STUART OVENDEN

Food styling NANCY MCDOUGALL | Styling JENNY IGGLEDEN


Chorizo Scotch quail's eggs, recipe p30



Portuguese egg custard tarts

MAKES 12 **PREP** 1 hr plus chilling **COOK** 30 mins

A LITTLE EFFORT

FOR THE PASTRY
200g plain flour, plus extra for rolling
1 tbsp golden caster sugar
100g unsalted butter, chilled
FOR THE FILLING
4 egg yolks
1 tbsp cornflour
100g golden caster sugar
1 vanilla pod
1 cinnamon stick
Thick strip of lemon zest
250ml milk
250ml double cream

1 Tip the flour and sugar into a large mixing bowl. Slowly add around 300ml very cold water, or just enough so that you have a soft dough that picks up all the crumbs from the outside of the bowl, but isn't too sticky to handle.
2 Wrap the dough in cling film and chill while you coarsely grate the butter. Roll the dough out onto a floured work surface to a 30 x 40cm rectangle, then sprinkle the surface with half the grated butter to form an even layer. Don't worry if the butter clumps together, just make sure the pieces are evenly distributed. With the shorter edge facing you, fold the top third of the dough towards you to the centre and the bottom third up over it. Give the dough a quarter turn, then roll out to the same size as before, sprinkle with the rest of the butter and repeat. Wrap the dough tightly in cling film and chill for 30 mins while you make the filling.
3 Put the egg yolks and cornflour in a large heatproof mixing bowl and whisk in the sugar until pale and thick. Split the vanilla pod in half along the length and scrape out the seeds. Put the seeds in a medium-sized saucepan, along with the empty pod, the cinnamon stick and the lemon zest. Pour the milk and cream over the aromatics, stir and heat very gently until only just simmering. Pour the hot mixture over the egg yolks and whisk well. Pour the custard back into the pan and warm through for 2-3 mins or until thickened slightly to a consistency similar to double cream. Strain the custard through a sieve into a large jug and set aside, covered with cling film.
4 Heat oven to 200C/180C fan. Grease a 12-hole muffin tin with butter. Take your pastry out of the fridge and roll it flat to 40 x 20cm. Starting at the longest side, roll it up tightly to make a long roll of pastry. Trim the ends, then cut into 12 pieces, and turn them cut-side up on the work surface, so the spiral is facing upwards. Carefully flatten them out until they are big enough to line the holes in the muffin tin, trying not to skew the spiral shape too much. Press into the tins, then carefully pour in the custard mixture, filling each tart almost to the top.
5 Bake for 30 mins or until the pastry is cooked through and the custard is just starting to puff up but not balloon.
6 Remove from the oven and allow them to cool and sink gently back into shape. Serve cold with coffee.

PER TART energy 300 kcals • fat 20g • saturates 12g • carbs 25g • sugars 11g • fibre 1g • protein 4g • salt 0.1g



Chorizo Scotch quail's eggs

MAKES 12 **PREP** 1 hr 30 mins **COOK** 20 mins

MORE OF A CHALLENGE P

FOR THE EGGS
1 tbsp vinegar
12 quail's eggs
100g stale bread
100g blanched almonds
Small pack of flat-leaf parsley
250g cooking chorizo
2 hen's eggs
3 tbsp plain flour
Sunflower oil, for deep-frying
FOR THE MAYONNAISE
5 tbsp mayonnaise (shop-bought, or try one of our homemade mayonnaise recipes at bbcgoodfoodme.com)
1 tsp smoked paprika

1 Fill a large pan with water and a good-sized bowl with iced water. Bring the water in the pan to a rolling boil, add the vinegar, then slowly lower in your quail's eggs with a spoon. Let them cook for 1 min, then quickly take the pan off the heat and let them sit in the water for 30 secs. Scoop the eggs out with a slotted spoon and plunge straight into the bowl of iced water. Leave them to cool for 10 mins while you prepare the coatings.
2 Put the stale bread, almonds and parsley in a food processor and blitz until evenly chopped into very fine pieces, then season well and transfer to a shallow dish. Remove the outer casing from the chorizo and discard it, roughly chop the chorizo and put it in the food processor along with 1 hen's egg. Blitz briefly until just smooth. Divide the mixture into 12 patties and put them on a plate or tray. Set up 3 bowls with the flour in one, remaining egg, beaten, in the second, and the crumb mix in the third.
3 Carefully peel the quail's eggs, taking care not to expose the yolk, which should be softly boiled. Place 1 chorizo patty on top of a piece of cling film. Flatten it as thin as you can, then put a quail's egg on top. Use the cling film to help you draw the edges of the patty up and around the egg until it's completely enclosed. Twist the ends of the cling film together to tightly form it into a ball. Unwrap the Scotch egg and roll it first in the flour, then dip in the beaten egg, followed by rolling it in the crumb mix. Repeat the beaten egg and crumb mix step to ensure a generous coating, then repeat the whole process for the rest of the eggs.
4 Half-fill a medium-sized saucepan with sunflower oil and heat it until it reaches around 180C. Lower in the Scotch eggs using a slotted spoon and fry for 5 mins. Only cook 2 or 3 at a time to avoid overcrowding. If the Scotch eggs are browning very quickly, turn the heat down, but do leave them in the oil for the full 5 mins to ensure the chorizo is cooked through. When done, scoop them out with a slotted spoon onto a plate lined with kitchen paper to absorb some of the oil. Repeat with all the eggs. While still hot but cool enough to be handled, cut each in half and arrange on a platter.
5 In a small bowl, stir the mayonnaise and smoked paprika together, and serve as a dip on the side.

PER SERVING energy 323 kcals • fat 28g • saturates 5g • carbs 9g • sugars 2g • fibre 1g • protein 10g • salt 0.7g »

ADVERTISEMENT

LURPAK® VEGETABLE BHAJI

PREP 15 mins | COOK 15 mins | SERVES 4

What you need:

- 2 cups (185 g) besan (chickpea) flour
- 1 tablespoon cumin seeds, toasted
- 1 teaspoon chilli powder
- ½ teaspoon ground turmeric
- 250 ml cold water
- 250 g thinly sliced assorted vegetables, such as red onion, eggplant, carrots and snowpeas
- 1 green chilli, deseeded and finely chopped
- 2 tablespoons chopped coriander
- Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 200 ml Lurpak Cooking Liquid (approx)
- 1 bunch fresh curry leaves
- 1 cup mint raita or yoghurt, to serve

What you do:

Mix together the flour, cumin seeds, chilli powder and turmeric in a large bowl. Add the water and mix to a smooth batter. Fold in the vegetables, green chilli and coriander. Season with salt and pepper.

Heat a frying pan over a medium high heat and add 50 ml of Lurpak Cooking Liquid. Shallow fry heaped tablespoons of the vegetable mixture, in batches, for 5 minutes each side until golden and crispy, replenishing the Lurpak Cooking Liquid as necessary.

Transfer the cooked bhaji onto a plate lined with a paper towel.

Fry the curry leaves for a few seconds in Lurpak Cooking Liquid and then drain. Serve the bhaji, garnished with the fried curry leaves and accompanied by the raita or yoghurt.





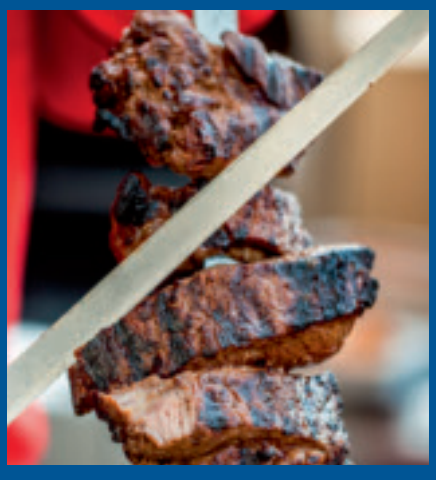
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Spanish tortilla

SERVES 4 **PREP** 30 mins **COOK** 50 mins

EASY V 1 OF 5 A DAY GLUTEN FREE

1 large white onion, sliced
4 tbsp olive oil
25g butter
400g waxy potatoes, peeled, quartered and finely sliced
6 garlic cloves
8 eggs, beaten
Handful of flat-leaf parsley, chopped, plus extra to serve
TO SERVE (optional)
1 baguette, sliced
4 vine tomatoes, peeled and coarsely grated (see step 4 of recipe on left)
Drizzle of olive oil

1 Put a large non-stick frying pan on a low heat. Cook the onion slowly in the oil and butter until soft but not brown – this should take about 15 mins. Add the potatoes, cover the pan and cook for a further 15-20 mins, stirring occasionally to make sure they fry evenly.
2 When the potatoes are soft and the onion is shiny, crush 2 garlic cloves and stir in, followed by the beaten eggs.
3 Put the lid back on the pan and leave the tortilla to cook gently. After 20 mins, the edges and base should be golden, the top set but the middle still a little wobbly. To turn it over, slide it onto a plate and put another plate on top, turn the whole thing over and slide it back into the pan to finish cooking. Once cooked, transfer to a plate and serve the tortilla warm or cold, scattered with the chopped parsley.
4 Take slices of warmed baguette, stab all over with a fork and rub with the remaining garlic, pile on grated tomatoes and season with sea salt and a drizzle of olive oil.

PER SERVING energy 404 kcals • fat 27g • saturates 8g • carbs 22g • sugars 4g • fibre 3g • protein 16g • salt 0.5g



Eggs Florentine pizza

MAKES 4 **PREP** 20 mins plus proving
COOK 30 mins EASY V CALCIUM 1 OF 5 A DAY

FOR THE BASE
125ml milk
1 tsp golden caster sugar
2 tsp dried yeast
500g pasta flour or bread flour, plus extra for dusting
1 tbsp olive oil
FOR THE TOPPING
4 tomatoes
2 garlic cloves, crushed
Small bunch of oregano, chopped (or 1 tsp dried oregano)
80g bag baby spinach
50g Parmesan, grated
125g ball mozzarella, torn into pieces
4 large eggs

1 Pour 150ml boiling water into a jug with the milk and sugar. Sprinkle in the yeast and leave to stand for 10 mins or until frothy.
2 In a large bowl, stir together the flour and 1 tsp salt, then make a well in the centre. Pour in the olive oil, followed by the yeast mixture. Stir well, then knead together in the bowl to form a soft dough.
3 Transfer to a floured surface and knead for 10 mins. Put the dough in a bowl, cover with cling film and leave in a warm place for 1 hr.
4 Peel the tomatoes by scoring the skins with a cross, putting them in a bowl and pouring over just-boiled water. Drain the water after 2-3 mins and the skins will peel away easily. Coarsely grate the tomatoes, then stir in the garlic and oregano. Blanch the spinach by drenching it in boiling water in a colander over the sink. Leave the spinach until it's cool enough to handle, then squeeze out any excess moisture.
5 Heat oven to 220C/200C fan. Divide your dough into 4 and shape each piece into a ball. Roll the bases out flat to about 25cm diameter and dimple the surfaces with your fingers. Spread each one with the tomato paste, season, then divide the cooked spinach between the 4 pizzas. Top with grated Parmesan and torn mozzarella.
6 Slide the pizzas directly onto hot oven shelves or baking sheets. Bake 2 at a time for 5 mins, then nudge the toppings away from the centre slightly to create a gap in which to crack the eggs. Return the pizzas to the oven to finish cooking – they should take another 6-7 mins, depending on how you like your yolk.

PER PIZZA energy 728 kcals • fat 22g • saturates 10g • carbs 94g • sugars 6g • fibre 5g • protein 35g • salt 2.1g



An epicurean haven

There's a new gourmet grocer in town that no foodie should miss!



Coming soon!

You can have your favourite kitchen essentials from the store or ready-made meals from the café delivered to your front door soon. All products are also available at their Al Wasl Square store. Visit thefarmers-garden.com for more info. Call 04-3212621.

Food lovers in Dubai are always on the look-out for new and unique offerings when it comes to food shopping, and they have a real treat in store – the brand new Farmer's Garden, a gourmet grocery store located in the Wasl Vita Mall. This, their second outlet and flagship store of the brand – they have another one in Wasl square as well, which opened a few months ago – is a refined retail concept aimed at bringing 'nature's best from around the globe' to foodies in Dubai. The newly opened store is definitely a paradise for gourmands, fashioned after old-school European groceries with rustic-style wooden shelves, floors, crates and chalkboard signs. With over 30 authentic, gourmet brands from different parts of the globe, many of the products in store are exclusive. Some of the hard-to-find-elsewhere offerings include artisanal pastas and sauces from France and Italy, cheeses and flavoured crackers from Portugal, herbs and spices from Lebanon, premium olive oils and preserves from Greece, and organic chocolates from Germany.

People with special dietary requirements won't feel left out either, with a wide range of items such as gluten- and sugar-free products on offer, including specialty cake flours, crumpet & pancake flours, pizza & waffle flours and polenta mealie bread mix, to name just a few. There are also plenty of healthy, locally sourced produce to be had at the store, from free-range eggs and fresh milk to organic fruits and vegetables.

It's more than just aisle after aisle of foodstuffs however, there is lots more on offer, including an in-house café where you can indulge in freshly brewed coffees, fresh juices and try out some delectable nibbles. After buying your fresh fruits and vegetables, you can also get them juiced for free at the juice bar.

Four unique finds

Farmer's Garden has an array of unique products every foodie should have in their kitchen. Here is a selection of some unusual ingredients on offer and tips on how you can use them:

⁕ FALKSALT WILD MUSHROOM CRYSTAL FLAKES, DHS23



The delicate pyramid shaped flavoured salt crystal flakes are made by experienced salt makers using Mediterranean sea water. The salt is harvested, dried, sieved and finally packed, all by hand. Its flaky texture and excellent crunch make the gourmet sea salt flakes ideal for finishing any meal – use the Wild Mushroom Crystal Flakes to add a delicate accent to your steak, roasted vegetables, or baked potato. You can also dust the salt flakes over creamed mashed potatoes.

⁕ CREATIVE FRUIT VINEGAR WITH LEMON, HONEY AND SEAWEED, DHS28



These gourmet fruit vinegars contain pulps of real fruits like pineapple, apple, raspberry and passion fruit, complemented with flavours like cinnamon, seaweed and honey. This citrusy fruit vinegar is perfect for drizzling over salads or a platter of fried calamari.

⁕ CREATIVE VINEGAR REDUCTION WITH APPLE PIECES, DHS28



Try incorporating this into a fish or chicken marinade before popping into the oven.

⁕ CASA LUCENA CARROT JAM EXTRA, DHS24



Forget berries and other fruit, this unique range of jams are made of ingredients such as carrot, pear, pumpkin and orange. This carrot jam pairs well with artisanal cheese crackers.

The Farmer's Garden
nature's best from around the globe

Kitchen notes

Nutrition advice, cooking tips and product picks for your pantry.



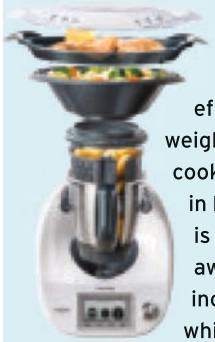
Reader tip of the month

If you find that your pastry dough has become too hard to roll out, add 1-2 tbsp of ice water to soften it a bit.

- Paige Andrews

Got a great tip you want to share?
Get in touch with us on facebook or twitter

Hi-tech kitchen hero



Every chef's favourite kitchen hand, the Thermomix, just got a digital makeover! This cult kitchen appliance, which packs the effectiveness of up to 12 appliances – from weighing, chopping, blending, and milling to cooking, whipping and emulsifying, and everything in between! – in one powerful, compact machine, is now available in a new model, the TM5. The award-winning design is now enhanced by the inclusion of an interactive touchscreen display, which offers a guided cooking function with on-screen recipe instructions. Recipes tailor-made to the Thermomix are incorporated into a smart chip, which means all you need to do is add the ingredients and the temperatures and timings will all be automated – to ensure simple, fast cooking. While this is an investment buy, loyalists promise that once you use a Thermomix, you'll never look back! Dhs5,500, visit www.uae.thermomix.com for more.

SMART FOOD SWAPS



422 calories
2 breaded, fried fish fillets

Swap for



308 calories
1 serving (215g) of vegetables and beef with fried rice

or



155 calories
150g boiled lobster

or



211 calories
1 serving of tuna steak (111g) seared in olive oil

Know your yolk!

Did you know, the colour of an egg yolk differs according to a hen's diet? Apparently, light yellow means the hens have been fed wheat and barley, while medium and dark yellow indicates they ate green vegetables.

MOZARELLA made in the UAE



Fresh buffalo mozzarella is divine with tomatoes, basil, or just a drizzle of balsamic reduction on top. While we usually shop for this cheese sourced from Italy, we will now be filling our baskets with locally produced cheese. Italian Dairy Products have launched a new buffalo mozzarella range, made of water buffalo milk from Campania, manufactured in a dairy factory in Sharjah. Available at Carrefour, priced at Dhs15 per 100g.

Health update> THE RISK OF EATING CLEAN

Until now, the idea of following a raw, clean or paleo diet was always considered a healthy option, and it is, but to a certain extent. The rise of clean, quality-focused diets has made way for a new disorder, orthorexia nervosa – when people become obsessed with eating raw, clean or paleo. The term orthorexia is a fixation of righteous eating, wherein the people who have the disorder focus on the quality of food, not quantity. The downside is that they become obsessed with foods that are good and bad for the body, to the point which can leave them malnourished, if they start to avoid a wide variety of food, as it can lead to deficiencies of essential nutrients such as protein, iron, and vitamin B. The disorder can take its toll on emotional and physical health, and can cause stress as well.

Look what we found! 3 great new products for your kitchen



Slather this Pineapple and vanilla jam on toast, for a sweet kick. Dhs35 at chezcharles.ae.

A pinch of Fleur de sel will amp up the flavour of your steak, grilled chicken, and leafy salads. Dhs30 at zoisfinefood.com.



Next time you're reaching out for a juice sweetened with artificial sugars, try this Organic beetroot juice packed with nutrients and vitamins instead. Dhs48 at The Farm.



Compiled by NICOLA MONTEATH | Photographs SUPPLIED, SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Make herbs the hero

Herbs give any dish that extra oomph and are also packed with nutrition, but are often relegated to the role of a mere garnish. Here, Cezar Manzanal, assistant head chef of new bio-organic café Tidjoori, shares sweet and savoury dishes with herbs as the main ingredient. Photographs CHARLS THOMAS



Philipino national Cezar Manzanal studied computer science and technology, but his passion for cooking led him to switching career paths in 2005. Having developed a skill in French and Italian cooking techniques, he previously worked at Brunetti café and Angelina in Dubai, and joined newly opened vegan restaurant in Dubai Marina, Tidjoori, this year.

Parsley patty salad

SERVES 4 **PREP** 15 mins **COOK** 10 mins EASY

150g parsley
3g salt
1g green chilli, chopped
2g garlic, minced
150g canned chickpeas
15ml olive oil
70 ml corn oil, for frying
For the salad
80g mesclun leaves
60g cucumber slices
80g cherry tomatoes, halved
50ml vegan mayonnaise

1 Blend parsley, salt, chilli, garlic, corn flour, and olive oil until it becomes thick. Add in the chickpeas and blend to make a thick, pasty batter. Shape each to about 3cmm and fry on medium heat for 2-3 mins.
2 Place the salad, tomatoes and cucumbers on a plate. Place the parsley patties on top, dress with the mayonnaise and serve.

PER SERVING 389kcals • protein 5.9g • carbs 24.2g • fat 31g • sat fat 3g • fibre 7g • sugar 3.2g • salt 0.83g

Text and styling NICOLA MONTEATH | Props from CRATE AND BARREL

Basil and strawberry pesto on asparagus bruschetta

SERVES 4 **PREP** 15 mins **COOK** 10 mins EASY

50g asparagus, stemmed
1 baguette, sliced and toasted
10ml olive oil, for frying
Salt and pepper, for seasoning
FOR THE PESTO
50g basil
60g strawberries
Juice of 1 lime
30g cashew nuts
10ml olive oil
Pinch of salt and coarse black pepper

1 Mix all the pesto ingredients to a thick, grainy consistency.
2 Pan-fry the asparagus in olive oil, on high heat, for 1-2 mins and season with salt and pepper according to taste.
3 Place two spears of the asparagus on top of each baguette slice, drizzle the pesto on top and serve.

PER SERVING 288 kcals • protein 10.7g • carbs 42.6g • fat 9.2g • sat fat 1.5g • fibre 3.7g • sugar 5.2g • salt 5.4g »



Thyme and hazelnut praline

SERVES 4 **PREP** 5 mins **COOK** 10 mins EASY

250g sugar
62.5ml water
100g hazelnuts, crushed
50g fresh thyme, leaves picked
Handful of raspberries (optional)

1 Preheat oven to 180C.
2 Add sugar and water in a saucepan, bring to boil on medium heat, without stirring. It should become amber in colour – about 7 to 9 mins. Remove from the heat, and set aside for 3 mins.

Then, add the hazelnuts and thyme to the mixture and give it a stir.
3 Place small spoonfuls of the mixture (to make bite-sized pieces) on a silicon mat to set, about 3 mins. When hardened, serve with raspberries, if you like.

PER SERVING 411kcals • protein 4.5g • carbs 69g • fat 15.3g • sat fat 1.2g • fibre 4.2g • sugar 64g • salt none





Coriander and mango gel with coconut ice cream

SERVES 4 **PREP** 15 mins **COOK** 10 mins

70g fresh coriander
500ml mango juice
3g agar agar
10ml water
4 scoops of vegan coconut ice cream
1 fresh mango, cubed (optional)

1 Soak the agar agar in water for 10 mins.
2 Heat the mango juice into a saucepan on medium heat, add the agar agar and bring to a boil. Remove from the heat and transfer to a container. Refrigerate for 1 hr. Once it turns into jelly, blend in the coriander, it will turn it into a gel.
3 Serve with the ice cream scoops, and fresh mango cubes, if you like.

PER SERVING 205kcals • protein 4.3g • carbs 40g • fat 3.8g • sat fat 2.25g • fibre 1.13g • sugar 32g • salt 0.18g

Mint, honey and sesame paste on buckwheat crumpets

SERVES 4 **PREP** 15 mins **COOK** 10 mins EASY

100g honey
40g sesame seeds, roasted
120g mint, finely chopped
Handful of berries, to serve
Berry jam, to serve (optional)
Fresh berries, to serve (optional)
FOR THE PANCAKES
120g mint, finely chopped
180g buckwheat flour
70g corn flour
60g agave syrup
5ml vanilla extract
5ml baking powder
50ml canola oil
300ml soy milk

1 Blend the honey, sesame seeds and mint together for 3 mins, and set aside.
2 Combine both flours to a mixing bowl and make a well in the centre. Add the rest of the pancake ingredients and mix with a whisk until the batter is smooth. Set aside for 10 mins.
3 Place a non-stick pan on medium heat and coat with baking spray. Fry the pancakes for 1 min on each side.
4 Serve the pancakes with the mint and honey paste, with the berry jam and fresh berries on the side, if you like.

PER SERVING 563kcals • protein 11.1g • carbs 88g • fat 20.4g • sat fat 2.2g • fibre 9.4g • sugar 76.2g • salt 0.15g GF

HEALTHY HERBS

Parsley: The tiny leaves are rich in chlorophyll, vitamins A, B, C and K, folate, iron, and zinc, and have anti-inflammatory properties as well. Nibbling on them helps reduce water retention, while working as a blood purifier, thanks to the Vitamin C content and chlorophyll.

Basil: The fragrant leaf is packed with vitamin K – essential for blood clotting – vitamin A, and antioxidants. It also contains iron, calcium, manganese, magnesium, and has anti-bacterial properties.

Coriander: Apart from improving digestion, blood sugar levels, and anaemia, the leaf is also known for its omega 3 and 6-fatty acids, B vitamins, and minerals like calcium and potassium.

Mint: Known for its digestive benefits, the aromatic leaf also helps prevent allergies and asthma, as it has an antioxidant compound known as rosmarinic acid. Mint also helps improve the immune system with nutrients like calcium, vitamins C, D, E, as well as B complex vitamins.

Thyme: Containing antiseptic and antibiotic properties to help aid cold and flu, thyme is also rich in vitamin K, iron, calcium, and manganese which promotes bone health. The herb is also eaten to help indigestion, while helping to improve vision.



Tropical FLAVOURS

Be inspired by the taste of the tropics with our sunshine-filled recipes.



Sticky banana & maple cake

SERVES 8 **PREP** 35 mins **COOK** 45 mins-1 hr

EASY

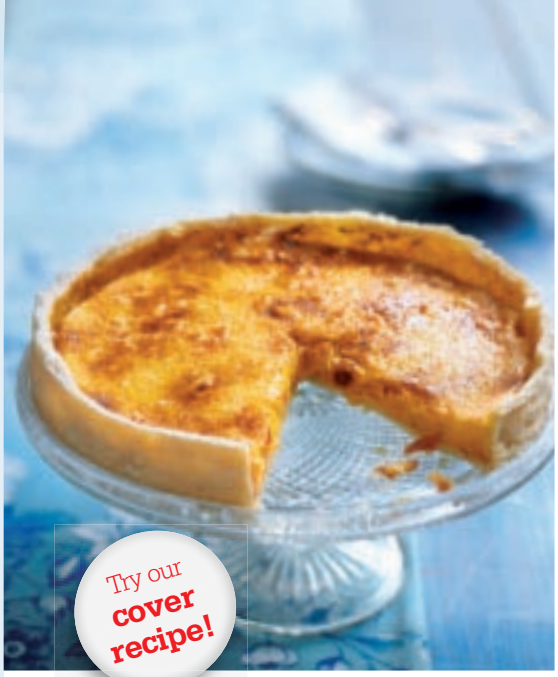
100g softened butter, plus extra for the tin
8 tbsp maple syrup, plus extra to serve
3 small ripe bananas and 1 over-ripe banana
200g light muscovado sugar
4 eggs
2 tsp vanilla paste or seeds scraped from 2 vanilla pods
200g self-raising flour
100g ground almonds
1 tsp bicarbonate of soda
200g pot Greek yoghurt

1 Heat oven to 160C/140C fan, butter a 20cm square cake tin and line the base with baking parchment. Pour in half the syrup, swirling to coat the bottom. Halve the 3 ripe bananas lengthways and lay, cut-side down, in the tin.

2 Beat together the butter, sugar, eggs, vanilla paste and over-ripe banana with an electric hand whisk. Fold in the flour, ground almonds and bicarb, then stir in the yoghurt. Carefully spoon into the tin without dislodging the bananas. Bake for 45 mins-1 hr until a skewer poked in comes out with only moist crumbs. Poke all over with the skewer, about halfway into the cake, then pour over the remaining maple syrup. Let it soak in for a few mins, then carefully turn out of the tin upside-down, drizzling the banana-studded top with more syrup. Slice and serve warm.

PER SERVING energy 514 kcals • fat 24g • saturates 10g • carbs 68g • sugars 47g • fibre 2g • protein 11g • salt 1g

KNOW-HOW **Vanilla paste is a thick syrup with the seeds from vanilla pods added. It gives an intense vanilla flavour.**



Caramelised passion fruit & lime tart

SERVES 8 **PREP** 30 mins plus chilling
COOK 40 mins EASY

500g sweet shortcrust pastry
8 passion fruits
Zest and juice of 1 lime
200g golden caster sugar
6 egg yolks
150ml tub double cream
Icing sugar, for dusting (optional)

1 Roll out the pastry and use it to line a 23cm tart ring, then chill for at least 20 mins. Heat oven to 180C/160C fan. Line the tart with baking parchment and baking beans, then bake for 15 mins. Remove the parchment, bake for a further 5-10 mins until golden, then remove from the oven and reduce the temperature to 140C/120C fan.
2 While the case is cooking, cut the passion fruits in half, scoop out the flesh into a bowl, then blitz with a hand blender. Push the pulp through a sieve and mix the juice with the lime zest and juice. Beat the sugar and yolks together until pale, then beat in the cream and fruit juice. Carefully pour the custard into the tart case, then bake for 40 mins, until set with a very slight wobble. Remove the tart from the oven, then leave to cool completely.
3 You can now either serve the tart as it is, or try a chef's tip and dust it with icing sugar, then caramelise the top with a blowtorch.
PER SERVING energy 546 kcals • fat 34g • saturates 13g • carbs 57g • sugars 34g • fibre 2g • protein 6g • salt 0.36g

Raspberry & coconut trifle cake

SERVES 12 **PREP** 30 mins plus soaking and chilling
COOK 45 mins A LITTLE EFFORT

FOR THE CAKE
200g butter, softened, plus extra for greasing
50g unsweetened desiccated coconut, soaked in water for 1 hr then squeezed dry
200g golden caster sugar
200g self-raising flour
1 tsp baking powder
4 eggs
1 tbsp milk
2 tbsp from a 200ml pack coconut cream (keep the rest for the filling)
FOR THE LAYERS AND TOPPING
1 tbsp cornflour
4 tbsp icing sugar
600ml good-quality ready-made custard from the chiller
4 tbsp Malibu (or you could use white rum)
Zest and juice of 1 lime
300g pack frozen raspberries, defrosted, or use fresh
370g jar raspberry jam
150ml pot double cream
Fresh coconut, shredded, for decoration (optional)

1 Heat oven to 180C/160C fan. Butter and line a deep 20cm loose- bottomed cake tin. Beat all the cake ingredients together until smooth, pour into the tin, then smooth the top. Bake for 40-45 mins until golden and risen. Cool completely on a wire rack; once cold, put into the fridge. Meanwhile, make the custard – whisk the cornflour and 1 tbsp icing sugar into the remaining coconut cream until smooth. Bring the custard to the boil, then whisk in the coconut mix. Keep whisking until it's boiling and fairly thick. Tip into a bowl, cover with cling film, then cool.
2 Mix the Malibu, lime zest and juice and 2 tbsp icing sugar. Trim off the top of the cake if it's domed, then cut into three horizontally using a serrated knife.
3 Line the cleaned cake tin with plenty of cling film (a little oil helps it to stick), then put a circle of cake back in the bottom. Sprinkle with some of the Malibu mix. Crush 100g of the raspberries and mix well into the jam, then fold in 100g whole raspberries. Spoon onto the sponge in the tin but don't go right to the edges.
4 Top with the second piece of cake, sprinkle with more Malibu mix, then spoon over the custard and spread it out. Top with the final layer of cake, sprinkle with remaining Malibu, then chill for at least 4 hrs, covered with cling film, to set the layers and let the flavours mingle.
5 Once set, remove the cake from the tin, then slide onto a serving plate. Softly whip the cream with the final 1 tbsp icing sugar, then spread over top. Scatter with the remaining whole raspberries and decorate with coconut, if you like.
PER SERVING energy 554 kcals • fat 29g • saturates 18g • carbs 69g • sugars 53g • fibre 2g • protein 7g • salt 0.72g »



Sugar-dusted passion cake

CUTS INTO 12 squares **PREP** 20 mins **COOK** 1 hr
EASY ❄ un-iced

250ml sunflower oil, plus a little extra for greasing
140g dark muscovado sugar
250g wholemeal flour
100g desiccated coconut
2 tsp mixed spice
2 tsp baking powder
50g walnuts, roughly chopped
4 eggs, lightly beaten with a fork
3 tsp vanilla extract
250g carrots, peeled and grated
432g crushed pineapple, drained, reserving 50ml juice (see tip)
Zest and juice of 2 limes
200g caster sugar
Icing sugar and doilies, mascarpone and natural yoghurt, to serve

1 Heat oven to 160C/140C fan/gas 3. Grease and line a deep, 20cm square tin with baking paper. Sift the muscovado until it's lump-free. Tip into the largest bowl you have with the flour, coconut, mixed spice, baking powder and walnuts, then mix well. In a jug, whisk together the oil, eggs and 2 tsp of the vanilla extract, then pour over the dry ingredients. Add the carrot, pineapple, reserved pineapple juice and lime zest to the bowl, then give everything a really good mix until combined. Scrape into the tin, then bake on a low to middle shelf for 1 hr, until a skewer inserted comes out with just moist crumbs clinging to it and no sticky mix. Once cool, the cake can be frozen for up to 3 months, then soak with the syrup once defrosted.

2 Meanwhile, make a lime syrup by gently heating the caster sugar, lime juice and final tsp of vanilla in a small pan. Once dissolved, boil for a few mins until syrupy.

3 Leave the cake in its tin until cool enough to handle, then turn upside-down onto a wire rack. Using a skewer, poke holes all over the cake and drizzle over the syrup a little at a time, waiting for the last addition to soak into the cake before pouring over any more. Cool completely, then trim the edges. Will keep for a few days in an airtight tin.

4 To serve, put the cake onto a serving plate, right-side up, and place a doily, or a few doilies, over the top. Dust liberally with icing sugar, then very carefully lift off the paper without disturbing the sugar. Serve immediately, as the icing sugar will begin to melt after a while, with a dollop of something creamy on the side – try mixing equal amounts of mascarpone and natural yoghurt with a little more icing sugar.

PER SERVING energy 487 kcals • fat 30g • saturates 8g • carbs 50g • sugars 36g • fibre 4g • protein 7g • salt 0.36g

TIP **If you can't get hold of crushed pineapple, drain the same amount of canned pineapple chunks in natural juice, and pulse in a food processor until mushy.**





Mango & passion fruit roulade

CUTS INTO 10 slices **PREP** 20 mins **COOK** 12-15 mins
A LITTLE EFFORT LOW FAT ❄ sponge only

3 eggs
85g golden caster sugar, plus 1 tbsp
85g plain flour, sifted
1 tsp baking powder, sifted
1 tsp vanilla extract
FOR THE FILLING
1 tbsp golden caster sugar
Flesh from 2 large, ripe passion fruit
2 mangoes, peeled and cut into small chunks
250g pack frozen raspberries, defrosted
200g tub 2% Greek yoghurt or very low-fat fromage frais

1 Heat oven to 200C/180C fan. Grease and line a 30 x 24cm Swiss roll tin with non-stick paper. Put the eggs and sugar into a large bowl and beat with an electric hand whisk until thick and light, about 5 mins. Fold in the flour and baking powder, then the vanilla. Tip into the tin, tilt to level the mix, then bake for 12-15 mins until golden and just springy. Turn onto another sheet of paper, dusted with 1 tbsp caster sugar. Roll the paper up inside the sponge, then leave to cool completely. *Sponge can be frozen for up to 1 month.*

2 Fold sugar, passion fruit pulp and one-third of mango and raspberries into the yoghurt. Unroll the sponge, spread with filling, then roll up. Serve with the rest of the fruit on the side. Roulade can be filled and rolled up to 2 hrs before serving and kept in the fridge.

PER SERVING energy 153 kcals, fat 3g, saturates 1g, carbs 28g, sugars 21g, fibre 2g, protein 5g, salt 0.26g >>

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PREP 40 mins | COOK 10 mins | SERVES 4

What you need:

- 4 garlic gloves, crushed
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped coriander root
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 red chilli, deseeded and finely chopped
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons fish sauce
- 20 medium raw prawns, peeled and deveined, with tails
- 2 tablespoons Lurpak Clarified Butter

Salad:

- 4 small cucumbers, cut into ribbons
- 2 mangoes, peeled and cubed
- 250 g snow peas, blanched
- 250 g baby asparagus, blanched
- Lime, to garnish

What you do:

Place the garlic, coriander root and black pepper into a mortar and, using the pestle, grind to a paste. Tip the paste into a bowl and stir in the chilli, brown sugar and fish sauce. Add the prawns and toss to coat. Set aside for 30 minutes.

Heat a large frying pan or grill plate to high. Add the Lurpak Clarified Butter and when melted and sizzling add the prawns. Cook for 2 minutes each side, until pink.

Scatter the salad ingredients on a plate and lay the prawns on top. Pour over any pan juices, if desired. Garnish with lime to serve.



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Coconut-ice marshmallows

MAKES 40-50 depending on the size **PREP** 30 mins plus setting **COOK** 20 mins MORE OF A CHALLENGE

300g desiccated coconut
10 sheets gelatine
500g granulated sugar
4 tsp liquid glucose
2 large egg whites
1 tsp vanilla extract
1 tbsp Malibu, or coconut liqueur
Pink food colouring
A little icing sugar, for dusting

1 Toast half the coconut in a large, wide pan over a very low heat. Keep stirring the whole time so the coconut toasts evenly. When the flakes are tinged golden brown, tip into a bowl to stop them cooking any further.
2 Line 2 square tins or dishes (18cm or 16cm) with baking parchment. Spread half the toasted coconut evenly over the base of one, and half of the untoasted coconut over the base of the other.
3 Put the gelatine leaves, one by one so that they don't clump together, in a large bowl of cold water and leave to soften while you make the marshmallow mixture. Put the sugar, liquid glucose and 200ml cold water in a small, deep heavy-based saucepan, so that the mixture will be deep enough to get a thermometer reading. Place over a low heat until the sugar has dissolved completely. Turn up the heat and boil until the mixture reaches firm ball stage on a sugar thermometer (about 125C) – this will take a while. If you don't have a sugar thermometer, drop a little of the syrup into a glass of very cold water – if it sets to a firm but malleable ball, it's ready.
4 While the sugar is boiling, beat the egg whites in a large bowl with an electric hand whisk until stiff.
5 When the syrup has reached the right stage, pour it in a steady stream into the egg whites while you continue whisking – making sure it hits the egg whites before the whisk blades. Lift the gelatine leaves out of the water, squeeze out any excess water and add, one at a time and still whisking continuously, to the mixture. Add the vanilla and Malibu, and continue whisking – the mixture will go shiny and start to thicken. Continue whisking for about 10 mins until it's very thick, just pourable.
6 Scrape half the marshmallow mixture into the tin with toasted coconut and spread the top to flatten as much as possible, then sprinkle over the remaining toasted coconut.
7 Add some pink food colouring to the second half of the mix, little by little and whisking all the time, until you get a nice colour. Scrape into the untoasted coconut tin, level as for the first, and sprinkle with the remaining untoasted coconut. Leave to set somewhere cool (but not the fridge) for at least 2 hrs, or until firm.
8 Ease the sheets of marshmallow away from the sides of the tins, then turn out onto a chopping board. Remove the parchment and cut into squares with a sharp knife dusted with a little icing sugar if it is sticking. *Keep in an airtight container, layered between sheets of parchment, for up to a month.*

PER MARSHMALLOW (50) energy 80 kcals • fat 4g • saturates 3g • carbs 11g • sugars 11g • fibre 1g • protein 1g • salt 0g



Say cheese!

BBC chef James Martin shares new recipes with with cheeses.

Photographs PHILIP WEBB

Cheddar & sage scones, recipe p48

Portrait photograph DAVID MUNNS | Food styling SARA BUENFELD | Styling SUE ROWLANDS

Blue cheese, butternut & barley salad with maple walnuts

SERVES 6 **PREP** 10 mins **COOK** 45 mins

EASY V FOLATE 2 OF 5 A DAY

1 butternut squash, peeled and cut into large chunks, seeds reserved
2 red onions, each cut into quarters
3 garlic cloves, peeled and bashed
3½ tbsp extra virgin olive oil
Handful of thyme sprigs, leaves stripped, plus extra to garnish
300g pearl barley
50g walnuts, roughly chopped
1½ tbsp maple syrup
1 tsp brown sugar
½ tsp chilli flakes
2 tsp balsamic vinegar
1 tsp Dijon mustard
100g baby spinach, shredded
140g blue cheese, thinly sliced

1 Heat oven to 200C/180C fan. Toss the squash, onions and garlic with 2 tbsp of the oil and some seasoning. Roast for 35-45 mins or until the vegetables crisp up in places – turning halfway through cooking and adding the thyme leaves. Remove from the oven and allow to cool, discarding the garlic. Cook the barley, following pack instructions, until al dente. Drain and cool.
2 Meanwhile, rinse the squash seeds, removing any flesh, and dry thoroughly. Put the walnuts and squash seeds in a frying pan and toast until golden brown. Add ½ tbsp oil, the maple syrup, sugar, chilli flakes and some salt. Let it bubble for a few mins, until the sugar has caramelised. Tip onto a tray, allow to cool, then bash into pieces. Make a dressing by mixing the balsamic, mustard, remaining oil and some seasoning.
3 Toss the squash and onions through the barley, followed by the spinach and dressing. Scatter over the cheese, nuts and some extra thyme sprigs to serve.

PER SERVING 479 kcals • protein 14g • carbs 57g • fat 22g • sat fat 7g • fibre 3g • sugar 12g • salt 0.7g »





Cheddar & sage scones

Make sure you use a mature cheese that packs a punch, so that the flavour shines through.

MAKES 8 **PREP** 10 mins **COOK** 15 mins EASY V ❄

225g self-raising flour
1½ tsp English mustard powder
50g cold butter, cubed
100g mature cheddar, grated
1 tbsp sage, finely chopped, plus 8 small leaves
1 egg, beaten
100ml buttermilk

1 Heat oven to 220C/200C fan. Mix the flour, mustard powder, ½ tsp salt and a grinding of black pepper in a large bowl. Rub in the butter until the mixture resembles fine crumbs. Stir in half of the cheese and the sage. Mix together the egg and buttermilk in a separate bowl.
2 Make a well in the centre of the flour mix and pour in all but ½ tbsp of the buttermilk mix. Working quickly, stir until the mixture forms a soft, spongy dough. Tip onto a lightly floured surface and knead briefly until smooth. Roll out to a 3cm-thick square. Cut into quarters, then half each quarter diagonally, so you have 8 triangles. Place the scones on a floured baking tray, brush with the remaining buttermilk, sprinkle over the remaining cheese and top each with a sage leaf. Bake for 12-14 mins until they are well risen, golden and sound hollow when tapped on the bottom. Eat while still warm, spread with butter.

PER SCONE 207 kcals • protein 7g • carbs 21g • fat 11g • sat fat 6g • fibre 1g • sugar 1g • salt 0.6g



Chicken stuffed with goat's cheese & tarragon

SERVES 4 **PREP** 15 mins **COOK** 20 mins
EASY GLUTEN FREE ❄ P

140g soft goat's cheese
Zest of ½ a lemon
½ long red chilli (deseeded if you don't like it too hot), finely chopped
1 tbsp tarragon, finely chopped
4 skinless chicken breasts
8 slices prosciutto (can be swapped with turkey bacon)

1 Heat oven to 190C/170C fan. Beat together the goat's cheese, lemon zest, chilli, tarragon and some seasoning. Cut a slit in the side of each chicken breast, ensuring that you don't pierce through the other side. Using your fingers, make a pocket and stuff the cheese mix inside. Season the chicken breasts, then wrap 2 slices of prosciutto around each, covering the pocket tightly.
2 Put on a baking tray, drizzle with olive oil and cook for 18-20 mins until cooked through but still moist, and the juices run clear.

PER SERVING 328 kcals • protein 47g • carbs none • fat 16g • sat fat 8g • fibre none • sugar none • salt 2.5g



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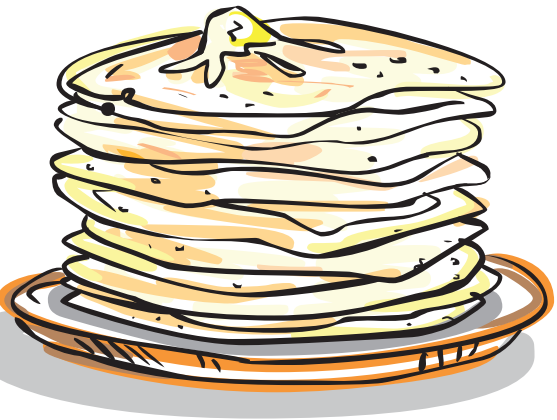
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Clever kitchen hacks

Make your kitchen appliances and gadgets work harder for you with these tips.

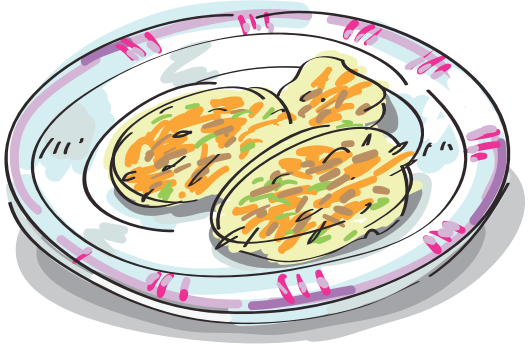
Getting pro results from your cooking efforts is easier than you think – just try these smart shortcuts and quick fixes and you'll never look back! Whether you love sous vide dishes, or restaurant-style shaved Parmesan on your pasta, here are the expert secrets that will help you get more bang for your kitchen gear buck.

Love pancake art?

Try this: Pancake art is really trending among foodies around the world right now! Let your turkey baster see the light of day even if it's not the festive season, as you fill it up with pancake batter, and make designs with it on a heated pan.

Love clean glass?

Try this: Don't limit your coffee filter to just those cups of coffee. You can use the filters to clean everything from a kitchen window, to a mirror, and the best part is – they don't leave behind any lint or ink which you would get when you clean with a rag or newspaper.



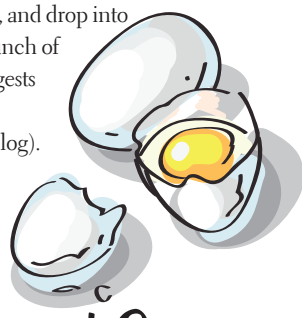
Love hash browns?

Try this: The next time you want to eat them, place the potato mix – with the moisture squeezed out with a cheesecloth – into a heated waffle maker. Fuss-free, and healthier, as it isn't deep fried, the potato treat is ready when it turns brown and crisp.

cv/text NICOLA MONTEATH

Love poached eggs?

Try this: "Crack the egg loosely into cling film, tie with a string, and drop into water. You can poach a bunch of eggs simultaneously," suggests Yousef Tuqan, founder of Middleeats.tv (a cookery blog). This way you avoid that horrid vinegar smell too!



Love toasting nuts?

Try this: Place a quarter of a cup of your favourite nuts in a popcorn machine, and cook for about a minute, or until they turn golden-brown. This will prevent burning the nuts as well.

Love sous vide?

Try this: Sally Prosser, founder of My Custard Pie.com, and reigning *BBC Good Food ME* Best Food Blogger award winner, suggests cooking salmon portions in sealed zip lock bags, to get the sous vide effect without the investment. "Fill the sink with very hot water from the tap, and slip the bagged portions into it. They will take about 15 minutes to cook. If your slow cooker (crockpot) can be set to a constant temperature of 60C, you can cook a variety of other foods sous vide too," she says.

Love chopping herbs in a jiffy?

Try this: Use your pizza wheel to go back and forth over herbs to chop them. The wheel is also good for cutting out strips of rolled-out dough, and a lattice-top for pies.

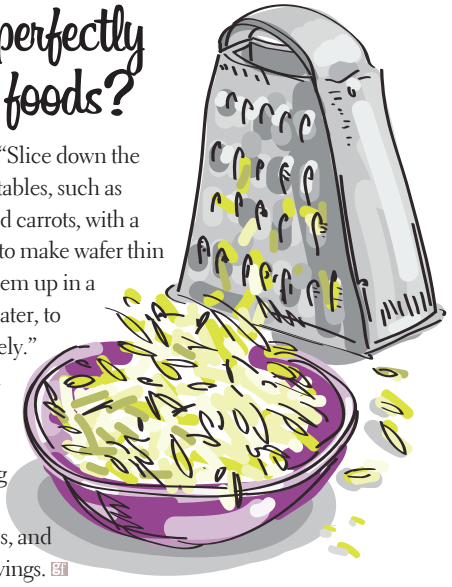


Love instant cooking?

Try this: The added advantage of a coffee maker is that it gives you instant hot water, which you can use to make oatmeal. Apart from this, you can also boil eggs in the coffee maker jug, make herb stock, or candied nuts. If your coffee maker has a filter basket, you could also use it to steam vegetables.

Love perfectly shaved foods?

Try this: "Slice down the length of vegetables, such as cucumbers and carrots, with a potato peeler, to make wafer thin strips. Crisp them up in a bowl of iced water, to curve attractively." says Sally. You can also maximise the peeler by using it to make chocolate curls, and Parmesan shavings.





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MY KITCHEN

Lotte Duncan

Lotte Duncan, cook and TV presenter, shows Val Wotton her wonderful cottage-style kitchen, and shares some of her green tips. Photographs ANDREW TWORT

Bubbly and fun, Lotte lives in Oxfordshire with her 18-year-old daughter Daisy. She has recently built a new kitchen where her two passions, cooking and gardening, come together, and where she can run her popular cookery classes.

Why build a new kitchen?

When I moved here six years ago, the kitchen was absolutely tiny. The centre of this cottage dates back to about 1640 and originally cooking would have been done in the huge fireplace in what is now the dining room. Then the passage across the back was used as a kitchen and it wasn't until 1980 that the previous owners converted a lean-to shed into the kitchen I lived with for five years. It was pokey, dark and so cold that, in the winter, ice would form on the inside of the windows – I used to wear a scarf and coat when cooking!

Who designed it?

I did. I sat down with a friend, who is a chartered surveyor, and outlined what I wanted. Then, because this is a Grade II listed cottage, I took our plans to the historic buildings officer and asked for advice. I wasn't allowed to make the extension bigger than the existing rooms, so it's only 3.5 x 4 metres, but it's made such a difference. Now I can do cookery demonstrations at home instead of having to travel all over the place.

What was your 'must-have' item?

An Aga – the kitchen is designed around that. Every other room in the house is low and dark, so I also wanted the kitchen to be high and open, with lots of glass and full of light, so that I feel I'm in the garden – gardening is my great passion. But it had to be sensitive to the old building, so the windows are the same height, quite low, and the plaster is rough lime plaster. And I didn't want rows of fitted units – it had to be totally free-standing.

Which Aga did you choose?

The biggest possible, a four-oven Cream Classic, which has cream lids. I'd wanted one for years and I absolutely adore it. It was expensive, but it will last forever, and although my electricity bill soared (it runs on electricity), my heating bills went down, as it warms the whole house. I can turn it up or down with the AIMS remote control, or programme it to be off to save energy. Agas are made from 70 per cent recycled materials and they're never thrown away, so they're not as un-ecological as you might think.

Is your kitchen eco-conscious?

It's pretty green for a pink and cream kitchen! I compost everything I can and I'm planning to get a food digester that will compost all food waste, even meat. I grow my own fruit and veg – there are apple, damson and crab apple trees, herbs and veg you want to get at quickly, like lettuce and beans, in the garden. I also share an allotment with my neighbours, and I buy as >>



AIMS, the Aga Intelligent Management System, means Lotte's Aga can be programmed to save energy



Lotte keeps storage jars on top of her china cabinet for easy access



A bucket ensures all organic waste – much of it from Lotte's allotment and garden – ends up on the compost heap



The previous kitchen was in a tiny area that now houses the fridge, storage cupboards and a trolley

much as possible from the local butcher and an organic farm shop, so my food miles are minimal. I get irritated by over-packaged and out-of-season foods, and of course I recycle glass, paper and plastics. Plus, I don't have plastic-y units and cheap appliances that will end up as landfill in five minutes.

What else is in it?

Even before the kitchen was built, I ordered the sink unit from Jonathan Avery, an Edinburgh-based company. I started with just that and the Aga, then my brilliant builder-carpenter, made me the island unit from wood and an Ikea worktop, a deep storage cupboard and – using left-over windowsill wood – the shelf above the Aga.

The pine cupboard that houses my china and glass came from my old kitchen, as did the pan rack. All my storage jars sit on top – I like everything to be open and at hand. After the Aga, my biggest expense was the Maytag fridge-freezer. I cook a lot, for friends and on demonstration days, so it had to be big. It's a real investment buy, but it holds everything, keeps the temperature constant, and is A-rated for energy.

Anything you'd change?

I move the island around for cooking demos so I might add lockable casters but no, I absolutely love my kitchen. We lived in chaos for six months, filth and dust everywhere, but the builders were fantastic – they even fed the cats – so it was worth it. I was involved with the kitchen from day one, so it's very personal and perfect for me and Daisy. It's warm and light, bright and very girly, and I love its closeness to the garden. Above all, it's so friendly and sociable. It was impossible to get more than one person in the old kitchen, so I used to feel really cut off. This is brilliant.

GET THE LOOK



Keep fruit and vegetables fresh in this Samsung RT6000 refrigerator. The fridge has a water dispenser, and easy slide shelf which makes it simple to store ingredients and clean as well. From Dhs2,199 at Samsung showrooms and leading electronics stores.



Brighten up a white bar stool or chair, like Lotte does, with this Purple pillow. Dhs70 at Al Huzaifa Furniture.



Colourful baking dishes like these Pot Luck Bakers trays add a pop of colour to your kitchen counter or island. Dhs139 each at Crate and Barrel.

LOTTE'S PLANNING TIPS

- Don't be too rigid about what you want – decide on your real essentials and invest in quality and durability, then let the rest evolve.
- An open, free-standing kitchen is more versatile than one with fitted cabinets, and can make a small room seem bigger.
- Compost all food waste, even meat, with a food digester.
- Buy A-rated appliances and reusable shopping bags for easy green-ness.

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An expert's guide to

Planning a kitchen makeover? Here are some essential things to consider before you start on the shopping, contracting and D-I-Y. By Nicola Monteath.

Let's face it, remodelling your kitchen is no small task. How do you figure out where to begin? John Rowley, Interior Design Manager at Figjam, a Dubai-based food concept and design agency, weighs in on the key points to plan and look into, before you begin to renovate or build your dream kitchen.

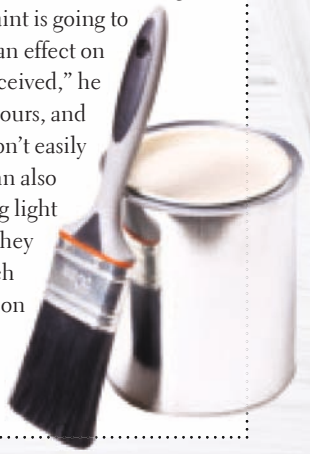


Create a mood board

The first, most important aspect of remodelling a kitchen is to draw out a plan of what exactly you want from your space? "It is important that the look and feel you want to give your kitchen comes from a strong core foundation. Pick one item that you have an emotional connection with, be it a light, a ceramic tile or a backsplash. This item should best describe you, and the rest will follow from there," says John. Make a mood board of everything you desire from your kitchen, and once it is finalised, move ahead with a clear vision.

Pick your paint

This step goes hand in hand with choosing your finish, since they complement each other. "Getting the right shade can sometimes be more a case of trial and error, so it's essential that you select and sample a number of different hues. The level of light in the area that the paint is going to be used in, will have an effect on how the colour is perceived," he says. Avoid trendy colours, and opt for colours that don't easily show signs of dirt. John also recommends avoiding light pastels and white, as they will need instant touch ups, if they get marks on them. Browns and greens usually work well in kitchens.



Select a finish

Right after you have finalised your kitchen design, choose the materials. "It should be done at the very start of the project and each material reviewed not in isolation, but with all other materials in mind too. A strong colour and material palette will complement each other," says John. He also states that a poorly selected finish can't be saved no matter how nice the fixtures and fittings. When choosing the material and finishes – whether veneer, stainless steel, wood, marble, or laminate – think about the floor, wall, backsplash, and lighting, to help you tie it all in together. For a classic look, use wooden cabinets, or go for a dark, distressed finish with patterns. Plain, sleek, and durable laminates work well for a modern-style kitchen, whereas matte adds a contemporary look to any space. A stylish, glamorous look can be recreated with polished metallic finishes, and bold glossy red, or bright yellow coloured cabinets.



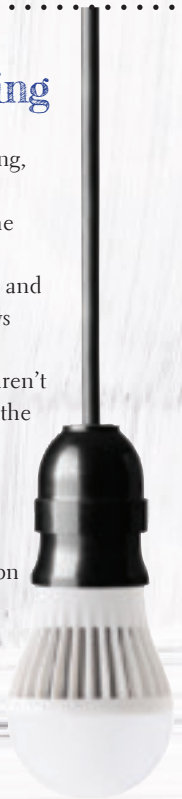
Make it functionally viable

The kitchen, the heart of any home, has to accommodate the needs of the entire family. John recommends following the rule of the triangle when it comes to planning what goes where. "A successful kitchen design will have the three main elements of the kitchen – the cooker, the sink, and the refrigerator positioned in a triangle. While you want the sink close enough to the fridge so that you're not constantly walking back and forth, it's also crucial that they are far enough away, to ensure that the working spaces don't interfere with each other," he says. You also need to keep in mind where most of the prep work for dishes will be done, and plan this space close to the cooker – the kitchen island or kitchen counter, which is where you would do most of your prep work, should not be too far away from the cooker. Think about how you use your kitchen, and plan the placement from there, keeping convenience in mind.

kitchen remodelling

Choose the right lighting

"When selecting lighting for your kitchen, getting the balance right between task lighting, and decorative, or ambient lighting, is really significant. You want ambient lights to set the tone, but equally vital is the task lighting. Workspaces that are poorly lit are dangerous and allow for the build-up of germs and dirt," says John. If pendant or decorative lights are the route you want to go down, make sure they aren't so big that they dominates the space. Under the cabinet spotlights, and pendant lights, both allow you to control the overall mood in the kitchen, to suit the time of day. Where possible, use LED lighting, as it's not only environmentally friendly, but will also save on power bills in the long term. Strip LED lighting can be used to great effect under cabinets, and nowadays there are LED spotlights that will allow you to fully light a kitchen for about a fifth of the energy used by traditional bulbs.



Finalise the flooring

There are three main points to consider when choosing the floor finish for your kitchen – Is it going to be durable for high traffic? Is it food-safe? How are you going to maintain it? "You must be aware that the final quality of the finished floor has to be as good as the quality of the fixing or bonding agent that you use. Always spend the maximum amount of money you can for it," says John. For a luxurious finish, try porcelain tiles or heavy-duty ceramic. If you want timber flooring, avoid cheap laminates, as the floor needs to be water and heat resistant, and a laminate won't handle the workload and will warp and crack easily. Narrow board hardwood gives a modern, clean feel to the kitchen, while a wider board exudes a rustic vibe. Nowadays, semi-solid engineered boards (real wood flooring) are available in different colours. Ceramic tiles are available from grade V1 (low) to V4 (high), and this covers the colour shading distribution of the tile, and the slip rating. "A tile with a low shade variation and a narrow grout detail will give the kitchen a modern sleek look, while a V4 tile will have a more rustic feel. Slip ratings are calculated from R9-R13," says John. A high slip rating is essential to avoid accidents in the kitchen.

Find the ultimate backsplash

A backsplash livens up a kitchen, but it is also the element that gets dirty the quickest, so the most important thing to consider is how easy it is to clean. According to John, traditionally, ceramic tiles would have formed the backsplash in the average family home, or perhaps marble if the budget allowed for it. But today, with modern technology and the ability to custom-make designs using laser etching, glass backgrounds have grown in popularity due to ease of maintenance. Keep in mind size and width restrictions when choosing one – if you are going to be fitting it yourself, carefully locate the joints so that nothing ruins the effect of your backsplash.



Organise your storage space

When planning kitchen cabinetry, think about what will suit you most – from the height, to the number of shelves. All too often, top shelves in kitchens tend to become out of reach for most users, so try and steer away from traditional designs to find clever ways to maximise your space. If you have awkward corners and odd spaces, use them to your advantage by planning small shelves that you can store bits and bobs in, or even simply placing something decorative to add colour.

"You could invest in open shelves with glass bases to add elegance to a space, and give the space a visual break, from the chunky cabinets all around," says John. "Put away bulky items from the kitchen counter, as it clutters the space."

"The inside of your bottom cabinet shelf is a great place to add hooks on for extra storage. Railings and hooks combined are a great combination for storage of things, from spoons to broom sticks, depending on where you place them. Plus, they are cost-effective and don't require a large amount of space," he adds. John also recommends investing in dividers for your cabinets, and using Tupperware containers to store loose grains and ingredients, to ensure a neat, tidy look for your kitchen.

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1 Ace stand, Dhs770 at Al Huzaifa Furniture.
2 Olivia mug in blue and gold, Dhs25 at The One.
3 Razzle Dazzle dinner set, Dhs279 at Home Centre.
4 Teapot with six cups saucers and a yellow stand, Dhs85 at Danube.
5 Skoja serving bowl (12cm) in lilac, Dhs8 at Ikea.
6 Paisley table mat, Dhs13 at Homes R Us.
7 Klistrig place mat, Dhs11 for 4 piece pack at Ikea.
8 Present time jug, Dhs300 at Room Service by Sauce.

25 ways to make your kitchen sparkle



Cleaning guru and UK media personality Aggie MacKenzie shares her proven tips for keeping the heart of your home spotless – and it doesn't have to cost a fortune!

Got that sinking feeling?

1 If your stainless-steel sink looks dull or has rusty stains, here's how to get it to gleam again. Squirt a little washing-up liquid over the surface, then scrub with a dampened pot scourer. Rinse and wipe with a cloth dipped in household white distilled vinegar (but not white wine vinegar, which is different) then buff dry with either kitchen roll or scrunched-up newspaper. You'll need sunglasses to look at it now!

2 Does your kitchen sink outlet smell, or is water slow to drain away? Put a handful of soda crystals plus a tablespoon of bicarbonate of soda at the mouth of the drain, then pour over a kettle of boiling water. Stand back and watch the action – it'll fizz madly for a few seconds. Pour over a second kettle of boiling water and your drain will smell fresh again.

3 **A newly installed granite work surface looks fantastic,** but many people complain of water stains after a while (more likely if you live in a hard-water area). The best remedy is ultra-fine wire wool (grade 0000) – rub the area very gently with some of the dampened wire wool and wipe dry. Not all granite is the same, so check in an unobtrusive corner before attacking the whole kitchen.



4 Smelly wooden chopping board?

Rub over some dried mustard powder, leave overnight, then scrub under a hot tap, rinse and dry.

Annoying pests



5 **If you find weevils or flour moths** – you'll see webbing first, or the odd moth flutter out when you open a cupboard – take instant action! Empty everything out of the cupboard and throw away all opened packs (and put in the outside bin quickly). Then vacuum your cupboards, especially the corners where eggs have been laid (empty the vacuum cleaner afterwards), and wash and dry your cupboards.

Buy flour and other dry goods in small quantities, as moths can turn up any time of the year. Store nuts in the freezer – they keep ages longer and you can use them straight from frozen.

6 **Fruit flies** (which are more common in summer) are a pain. The only way you'll see them off is to keep every single food item – even potatoes – in the fridge. Eventually they'll starve and disappear.

7 **Plagued by ants?** They don't carry disease but most people don't want them crawling all over the worktops. First find the source, then pour some boiling water over. If you'd rather deter them than slaughter them, sprinkle some chilli powder instead.

Grease is the word

8 **If you have baked-on grease coating the glass of the oven door,** apply some soapy water, then go at it with a scraper from a D-I-Y shop (the sort used for removing splashes of paint from window glass after decorating).



9 **The top of the cooker hood is a magnet for dust and grease.** The easiest way to cut through this is with a hot, damp microfibre cloth (the fluffy sort), followed by a waffle cloth (textured like a waffle) for extra absorbency to help surfaces dry quicker. Some people prefer to use the cloths the other way round – see which suits you.

10 **If you never want to clean the oven floor again,** invest in the Magic Oven Liner (Dhs75, Lakeland), a non-stick heavy-duty sheet that will catch every splash of goo. It's easy to remove and you can even put it in the dishwasher.

11 We all know the best way to keep an oven clean

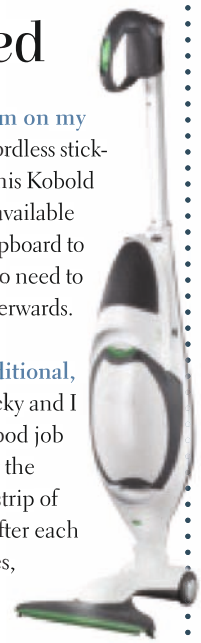


(if you don't have a self-cleaning model) is to wipe it down after each use. If you've left it a long time, a non-caustic remedy for smooth enamel oven interiors is to coat all inside surfaces with a thick paste of bicarbonate of soda and water. Leave overnight, then scrub with warm water and a scourer.

If you want to give yourself a treat, don't be ashamed of calling in a professional cleaner, who will return it to showroom condition.

Don't be floored

12 **I no longer use a broom on my kitchen floor** – I'm a cordless stick-vacuum convert! Keep this Kobold VK150 (right, which costs Dhs3,200, available from 4work.me) on standby in the cupboard to whip out at a moment's notice, and no need to track down the dustpan and brush afterwards.



13 **String mops may be traditional,** but they always look mucky and I don't believe they do a good job of cleaning. There is nothing to beat the E-Cloth microfibre floor mop. The strip of cloth attaches to the mophead and after each use, into the washing machine it goes, nice and clean for next time. >>

14 **A steam mop on floor tiles is a good idea** if you have toddlers knocking around. Steam is great at breaking down dirt and grease, and getting rid of germs.

A fresher approach

15 **Lemon juice and salt works wonders on dull copper pans.** Sprinkle salt over the flesh of half a lemon and rub over the metal. It immediately releases the tarnish and the copper shines through. Rinse and dry.

16 **Window cleaning used to be such a chore,** but not with microfibre cloths. Just wipe the dirt off with a soapy, fluffy microfibre cloth, rinse, then buff dry with a window cloth (it has the same texture as a specs-cleaning cloth). No smears, guaranteed.

17 **Do you love fish but not the smell**

it leaves behind in your kitchen after cooking? My advice is to use a Price's Chef's Candle (Dhs29, Lakeland) each time to eliminate any lingering fishy odours.



Get the most from your appliances

18 **Next time you put your dishwasher on,** stick your washing-up cloth or sponge on the top basket. It'll get a good clean and those nasty odours will stay away a bit longer. If your sink has a basket strainer, or you have a caddy for washing-up liquid and brushes, stick that in too.

19 **If you've cleaned out the fridge and it still smells stale,** odours may have penetrated the plastic. Try either a saucer of bicarbonate of soda or freshly ground coffee on one of the shelves.

20 **If you're wondering, 'Why does my washing machine smell musty?',** the reason is that we're all washing too often at low temperatures or using the quick cycle. Bacteria, which produce gases that give off a bad smell, will survive a 30C wash, so when the water drains away, the bacteria are left behind to build up and grow in number inside the machine – hence the nasty niffs (and eventually black mould on the seal).



The answer? Throw a cup of household white distilled vinegar into the empty drum and run the machine on the hottest wash. Thereafter, do a 60C wash once a week, particularly for towels and cotton sheets.

21 **Who reheated curry in the microwave,** splattered it everywhere – and now it's welded to the roof and sides? Never fear: put a heatproof bowl half-filled with hot water and a few lemon slices inside and turn on to High for 5 mins. The steam will loosen the food stains and the lemon will save you from retching.

22 **Hard water will leave limescale in your kettle.** The most efficient (and cheapest) way to get rid is to half-fill with white vinegar (not brown – it will overspill when boiled!) and half water, then bring to the boil. Leave overnight and drain. Most of the scale should come away (you may need to repeat). Rinse the kettle three times until all traces of vinegar are gone.

23 **If the enamel of your cast-iron pot is stained,** let a slice of fresh pineapple take the strain – the enzyme within cuts right through the food stain, making it easier to clean.



Gone to pot

24 **Is that bargain wok now rusty and sad-looking?** Take half a potato, smear washing-up liquid on the cut side, then wipe the pan surface with it. Rinse well, then apply a light coating of oil with a paper towel.



25 **Your roasting tin is caked with burnt-on grease.** No problem – there's an easy way out. Sprinkle over a handful of biological washing powder, half fill with water and heat on the hob until simmering. Leave to soak overnight, and in the morning the crust will rub away.

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Mark has made maximum use of the space by storing lots of his gadgets on the counter and creating a batterie de cuisine above the worktop

MY KITCHEN
Mark Hix



The chef and restaurateur tells Vanessa Berridge how he turned a dark holiday lodge into an attractive seaside home with a light-filled kitchen. Photographs GEOFF WILKINSON

Mark Hix, one of Britain's most celebrated chefs, helped revive the now widespread interest in using British ingredients. After 17 years overseeing London restaurants, including Le Caprice and J Sheekey, he set up on his own and now has restaurants in London and Lyme Regis, Dorset. His latest venture, Hixter Bankside, a chicken and steak restaurant, opened in Southwark last year. Mark lives in London, but likes to spend weekends and holidays in Dorset.

Why did you choose Dorset?

I'd been looking for a place here for some time, as I grew up in Bridport. My mother still lives in West Bay and I have a restaurant in Lyme Regis. I just loved the position, looking out over the sea. The lodge was all dark brown wood, with flock wallpaper and thick carpets, so I whitewashed the whole place, installed wood floors and used tongue-and-groove panelling on the walls and ceilings to brighten it up and give it the feel of a beach hut.

How did you plan the kitchen?

I wanted a simple space that I could use for weekends and holidays. I chose wood because it's warm, looks right in here and is practical. I wasn't planning to do cookery demonstrations here, but I realised that this wide worktop would work. I've got another leaf that I can attach to it, so eight people can watch me cook.

Who designed the kitchen?

I did. I am in kitchens all the time, so I knew exactly what I was looking for and how to pack in what I needed. If you get a designer in, they'll specify all sorts of things that you don't want or will never use. I did it as inexpensively as I could, working with the existing units, and buying repro lights and taps. The layout has the classic ergonomic triangle, so you can move around easily when you're preparing, and demonstrating, food.

What were your essentials?

My KitchenAid mixer and the V-Zug cooker, which combines convection and steam – it's perfect for cooking the lobsters I catch from my boat at Lyme >>







Regis. I've had my coffee machine for years and I love the look of it, although I don't use it very much.

How do you make such a small kitchen work?

I have had to use every inch of space. My cocktail cabinet is under the bench by the table, for instance, and I keep more stuff out on the surfaces than I do in London – but I rather like that informal look. I bring ingredients and crockery from London, then if I realise I haven't used them, I'll take them back. The batterie de cuisine, above the worktop, looks good, gets things out of cupboards and means that all your pans are to hand.

Anything you would do differently?

I'm actually planning to rebuild the lodge so it's easier to have friends to stay. I will make the kitchen bigger, with a longer work surface for demonstrations, as they've proved so popular. I will also have more storage space and buy square food containers so that they tuck in better.

GET THE LOOK

This My Kitchen Non-Stick lidded frypan is an essential for any kitchen. Dhs229 at Lakeland.





Mark loves his retro-style KitchenAid gadgets! This KitchenAid Artisan 2-Slot Toaster (Dhs1,495 at Al Ghandi Electronics) is gorgeous.

A wooden chair gives the kitchen a laid-back, natural vibe. We love this Kingsbury Merton folding chair, which can be stacked away to make more space when needed. Dhs69 at ACE.



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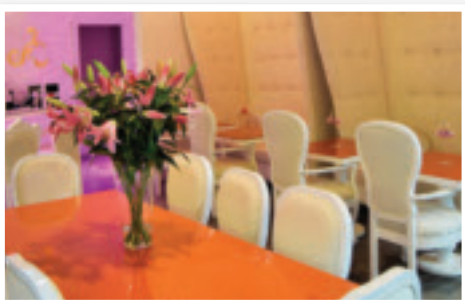
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3's a trend: FOOD & ART VENUES

We take a look at some of the most interesting foodie trends in town.

The last few months have seen a real explosion of restaurant openings that are as much of a platform for culinary art, as they are for art of the traditional kind – be it on canvas or on stage. Most of them home-grown brands – although some of them are imports too, such as the very newly opened La Cantine du Fauborg in Emirates Towers, an import from Paris which combines being a dynamic gallery for artists with fine gastronomy – these restaurants also tend to focus on fresh, organic and quality flavours. Not just new openings, some existing venues also seem to be veering towards involving art as part of their offerings – examples being Iris at the Oberoi, Dubai hosting an art auction recently, and Java Jolt, a café in Dubai Silicon Oasis which displays the works of local artists. Here are three new(ish) venues that caught our eye, for serving up good food with a side of culture.



Fukurou House, *DIFC*

This restaurant is guaranteed to evoke instant gasps of wonder as soon as you walk in. The cosy and intimate venue is done up in a white theme with gold accents, and luxe, vintage-style furniture. The art wall is a free gallery space for local artists, and there's also a small 'boutique' corner where local designers can showcase their fashion products – with a focus on quirky, eclectic designs. A tiny stage facilitates musical performances as well on request, particularly when they host private events. The food focuses on fresh, healthy and creative cuisine with a predominance of fruit – it is used in most of the dishes! – think freshly baked bread with apple caviar, salmon with strawberry salsa and beetroot ravioli. The way the carefully crafted dishes are presented are also works of art. While the menu, which has a touch of Armenia in its offerings – as the chef and the man behind the concept are both Armenian – is varied, their concept of 'intuitive dining' means they are happy to create bespoke dishes based on whatever a guest wants. Although unlicensed, they offer a range of luxury non-alcoholic wines.

Born of one man's passion to create something unique and special, this restaurant is a warm, welcoming place that you'll want to return to, as most people who have tried it, do. *Call 04-5521540.*



And Lounge, *The Address Dubai Marina*

This is a unique offering for Dubai, in that it exudes a comfy, intimate vibe in a lavish setting, where you can relax, while listening to classic hits – there is an entertaining duo on stage on weeknights. Designed to be a cradle for artists of all kinds, where they are encouraged to bring out their inner creativity, the décor is a bit of a pop culture-inspired mish-mash, with leather and velvet couches, quirky, colourful art that adorns the walls that were created on-site by Laurent Godard, velvet and chiffon drapes, and parquet and marble flooring teamed with unique lighting fixtures. There's a lovely outdoor terrace too.

The concise menu features burgers, ciabatta sandwiches, cheese boards, and platters to share. Expect dishes like the assorted starters from the sea, which includes a tuna tartar with juicy beetroot slaw, tender perfectly-done scallops, and meaty crab, or, as a vegetarian option, fried goat cheese salad with pomegranate, cherry tomatoes, walnuts, and spinach – a light, flavourful, and textured dish – which are perfect as nibbles while enjoying the atmosphere. The beverages are a real highlight here, as the bartenders are skilled at making fresh mocktails and cocktails, using herbs grown in their on-site garden, and there's an extensive selection of wines to choose from too. A final quirky touch is the photo-booth where you can stop by on your way out for a personalised keep-sake! *Call 04-5519698.*

Tribeca Kitchen & Bar, *JA Ocean View Hotel, Jumeirah Beach Residence*



As the name suggests, this New York-inspired restaurant offers a slice of NYC coolness married with Mediterranean rustic-chic in Dubai. The achingly hip venue with an industrial vibe features exposed ceilings and brick walls, funky light fixtures, vegetable crates on display and quirky art dotted all around the space. With a relaxed vibe and ingredient-led menu, the focus here is on sustainable, organic produce – even the wines they offer are organic. The quality ingredients are allowed to shine in simple, fuss-free dishes ranging from fresh salads to handmade pastas. They do an excellent Friday brunch as well, with beautiful burrata, delicious gourmet sliders and grills, and one of the best tiramisus in town, on offer.

On the art front, they are currently showcasing pieces from Dubai-based artist Jim Wheat's Dollarsandart project, which are available for sale. There's plenty of other art infused into the entire space, but as part of the décor. They also have a live entertainment stage where local bands perform regularly, and plans are afoot to do live art shows, and exhibitions with local visual and performing artists, as well as create a retail space for gourmet foods. *Call 050-3456067.*

Reviews by SUDESHNA GHOSH, NICOLA MONTEATH | Photographs SUPPLIED

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PREP 40 mins | COOK 10 mins | SERVES 4

What you need:

- 12 fresh rosemary sprigs
- 600 g lamb leg steaks
- 1 lemon, juiced and rind finely grated
- 1 tablespoon honey
- ½ teaspoon sumac
- Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 3 small red onions
- 1 each green, red and yellow capsicum
- 4 medium potatoes, peeled and thinly sliced
- Lurpak Cooking Mist
- Lemon wedges, to serve

What you do:

Remove the leaves from the rosemary sprigs, reserving 2 tablespoons of leaves. Soak the rosemary skewers in cold water for 30 minutes. Finely chop the reserved leaves.

Cut the lamb steaks up into 2 cm cubes and place in a non-metallic dish, and spray lightly with Lurpak Cooking Mist. Whisk together the lemon juice and rind, honey, garlic, and sumac. Season with salt and pepper, and then pour over the lamb, stirring to coat. Cover and refrigerate for 30 minutes. Steam the sliced potatoes until tender.

Peel the red onion and cut into wedges. Cut the peppers into 2 cm chunks, removing and discarding the seeds. Thread the lamb cubes and vegetables randomly onto the skewers.

Preheat a grill plate on medium high heat. Spray with Lurpak Cooking Mist, add the sliced potato and cook for 2-3 minutes each side, until golden, re-spraying with Lurpak Cooking Mist as necessary during cooking. Season with salt and pepper, remove from the grill plate, set aside and keep warm.

Spray the grill plate with Lurpak Cooking Mist and add the kebabs. Cook, turning frequently and re-spraying with Lurpak Cooking Mist, for 4-5 minutes or until cooked through and golden.

Serve the kebabs with the crispy potato slices, garnished with lemon wedges.





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ADVERTISEMENT FEATURE







THE PRIME WAY

Check out the gourmet offerings at Citywalk's stylish steakhouse, Silver Fox.

The experience Situated in the vibrant hotspot that is Citywalk, Silver Fox Steakhouse greets you with a warm, yet sophisticated ambience. With its earthy-inspired décor, and contemporary, white linen tables, the fine dining restaurant is instantly welcoming.

Famed for its commitment to only serving USDA Prime beef, it's natural for any diner to be drawn to the menu's meat selection – despite the restaurant also offering a quality range of seafood options. All the beef used by Silver Fox is produced in the US, where less than 2 per cent is certified as USDA Prime (it is next to impossible to find USDA Prime meats in supermarkets because of limited supply).

Once seated, extremely knowledgeable and attentive servers gladly introduce guests into the world of all things steak, whilst the delicious smell of freshly grilled meats flow through the restaurant's open kitchen. Silver Fox cooks all of its steaks using a high-standard 1800-degree flame broiler to ensure juices and flavours are seared in – a steak lover's dream!

With options such as filet mignon, prime rib, bone-in ribeye, New York strip and more on offer, diners are spoilt for choice. Appetiser options are much more orientated around seafood, with dishes like calamari, scallops, shrimp cocktail and crab-cake St.Francis – their seafood medley starter is not to be missed.

Another recommendation is Silver Fox's bone-in ribeye, which is highly marbled, giving a brilliant tenderness and tasty juiciness to the steak. Accompanying sauces such as the Silver Fox signature sauce, made of a blue cheese garlic cream and red shallot sauce combination, perfectly tops the steak off.

With such generous portions, it's more than easy to forget that the Silver Fox menu did not have a dessert section. A tray, however, tastefully laid out with a generous cake selection is displayed at the table for those with a sweet tooth. Comprising hearty treats such as cinnamon-infused bread pudding, crème brulee and chocolate fudge cake, it's hard to resist.

Whether for an intimate evening for two, a get-together for business associates or a gathering of friends, Silver Fox Steakhouse provides nothing less than a delectably satisfying experience.

KNOW YOUR STEAK

THE 3 BASIC CUTS OF PRIME BEEF ARE:

The ribeye: One of the richest, beefiest cuts available. It's highly marbled, and marbling is where a lot of the distinctive flavour comes from.

The striploin: Good marbling and a strong beefy flavour. Not as robust as ribeye, but much easier to trim with no large pockets of fat, making it an easy-to-cook, easy-to-eat cut.

The tenderloin filet mignon: Extremely tender with an almost buttery texture, it's also very low in fat.

Need to know

Three-course meal for two is around Dhs600. Call 04-7059794.

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Make Your Reservation Today









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Taste of the world

All the foodie news from around the globe.



Hue hotspots

Visiting Vietnam? Don't miss the exciting new Hue Food Trail introduced by luxury hotel La Residence Hotel & Spa, which takes foodies through the best noodle shops, food stalls, and restaurants to sample delicacies typical of the Imperial city, ranging from bún bò Hu (Hue style noodle soup) and bánh cunthtnng (fresh spring rolls), to local cocktails and a royal banquet. The tour also includes a market visit plus excursions to historical attractions. Along with three nights' stay at the über luxurious resort, plus a Vietnamese spa treatment, the package clocks in at US$499 (around Dhs1,850) per person, visit la-residence-hue.com.



BAHRAIN
STARRY NIGHTS

Bahrain's culinary offerings just got an international boost with the relaunch of Primavera – Trattoria Moderna at The Ritz Carlton Bahrain Hotel and Spa, which is now helmed by consultant chef, Michelin-starred Oliver Glowig of Rome's Aldrovandi Villa Borghese fame. The German chef has revamped the menu here to now offer authentic Italian dishes, with a local touch. Don't miss the moreish Vitello Tonnato (slices of soft veal on a bed of anchovy paste and capers), followed by creamy risotto with burrata, and ravioli Capresi stuffed with caciotta cheese and tomato sauce. All dishes are served on gorgeous colourful Italian crockery, in a refined setting amidst gold wall carvings and stunning views of the Gulf from the terrace. Call (+973) 1758 6499.

New to *London!*

Taj 51 Buckingham Gate Suites and Residences has opened a new southern European restaurant Kona, serving contemporary dishes inspired by Côte d'Azur and the coast of Liguria. Helmed by chef Tom Cruise (yes, that is his name!), the menu features local produce in dishes like Lobster Bisque starring Dorset crab and radish, Foie Gras brioche with Damson plum and Marcona almonds, and Chickpea Panisse with red pepper, yoghurt and baby aubergines. www.taj51buckinghamgate.co.uk.



Head to Hotel Eden Roc in Ascona, Switzerland for their seasonal 'Cantine Aperte' offering from May 29-31 where you can enjoy local wine estates while indulging in regional specialties. A two-night package including a resort dine around evening and breakfast is 875 CHF (around Dhs3,250) per person, www.edenroc.ch.

Text SUDESHNA GHOSH | Photographs SUPPLIED

Stay on track on your travels

Holidays, while everyone's favourite times of the year, can often be when any healthy eating regime goes out the window – especially if you are on a free-from diet. Nutrition and wellness expert Neha Jamani shares some smart tips to help you eat well on holidays.



Photograph SHUTTERSTOCK

We all let loose a little when vacationing, and let's face it, the best part of a holiday is often the joys of discovering new flavours and cuisines. But, coming back with extra weight around the waist, or worse, having TO suffer poor health as a result of not being able to meet usual dietary restrictions for intolerances or conditions such as diabetes, is not only stressful, but also takes away from the pleasures of the holiday per se!

If you're uneasy about eating when on the go, and stressed about falling out of your normal eating routine, take these simple steps for your next trip to ensure you have a healthy holiday. Let the planning begin!

Before you fly

✈Do your homework

Research the local cuisine so you know what to expect when you get there, making a note of the healthy dishes. Check in with friends who may have visited before and ask for restaurant recommendations where you know you can find food suitable for your diet. Local food blogs are also a good resource to turn to scout restaurants that offer healthier menus. When using online review sites for researching, use specific key words like vegan, gluten-free, paleo and so on, depending on your lifestyle, to find the right ones.

✈Find alternative accommodation

Instead of checking into a hotel, consider alternative accommodation, like serviced apartments or vacation rentals, where you can have a lot more control over what you're eating. Having a kitchen is great, and especially useful if you have, or are travelling with someone who has special dietary requirements or food allergies.

✈Learn the language

Familiarise and learn a few words in the local language like 'no sugar', 'no salt', 'sauce on the side', 'grilled' and so on – simple tweaks that you can use in restaurants to make a dish healthier. If you have food allergies and are travelling to a country where you don't speak the local language, food allergy translation cards are extremely helpful – they are basically wallet-sized cards that explain your allergy or dietary restriction in the local language. Check out www.allergytranslation.com or www.selectwisely.com.

On the plane

✈Eat consciously

Most leading airlines these days are accommodating

of health needs and special diets so pre-select a meal to your preference. Additionally, it's a good idea to bring your own snacks on-board and skip the airline's typically salty snacks that can contain added sugars and other nasties, and are often not suitable to specific diets. Many airlines increasingly do offer healthy snack options too, so opt for that piece of fruit over a chocolate bar next time! And most importantly, remember you don't have to eat whenever something is offered – it's a common mistake to over-eat or drink on flights, often out of sheer boredom, so make it a point to only eat when you're hungry, and ideally, around mealtimes when you would normally be eating anyways.

Hydrate

The low humidity level and dry atmosphere can result in dehydration if you are not careful, which in turn can lead to dry skin, headaches, muscle cramps and fatigue. It also exaggerates jetlag, so steer away from alcohol and caffeine on the flight. Instead, drink plenty of water often, and stick to juices and herbal teas as alternatives.

Adjust your body clock

When you get on the flight, adjust your watch to the local time zone of your destination so you can start to adjust your stomach – this is especially important in the case of long haul flights. If the snack trolley comes around and its 4AM at your destination, skip it, simply because you wouldn't eat in the middle of the night. Which is why, again, bringing your own snacks is helpful, so you can eat at appropriate times.

When you're there

Pack a snack

When you are out sightseeing, carry a small cooler bag with you so you can take along a few nibbles that are suitable for your diet, plus fruit, yoghurt, and fresh juices. Check out the local supermarket and scout out some local healthy snack options. Also make sure to carry drinking water along and make it point to hydrate as thirst can sometimes be mistaken for hunger.

Think fresh

When choosing meals, look for food cooked using seasonal local produce as much as possible, and don't abandon your '5-a-day' policy even on vacation. It's always a good idea to try the local fruits – they will be fresh, healthy and possibly something you may not find at home normally.

Plan your meals

While you will want to sample the local cuisine, every holiday meal doesn't have be an opportunity to go food crazy. A good strategy is to allocate one indulgent meal per day – so plan ahead if you know you will be going somewhere special, keeping the rest of the meals that day light. Also, even if you want to sample local delicacies, but they are not suitable for your diet (milk-based desserts for lactose-intolerant people, for example), then, rather than eating a whole one, order portions to share. When planning your days, take into account mealtimes so you can ensure you are near a suitable restaurant option when you need to eat – if you don't stick to eating on time, you will end up gorging on unhealthy food at odd hours.

Order smartly

Be aware of what the locally available options are, that are suitable for dietary restrictions – often traditional cuisine can have some delicious dishes that not everyone is familiar with (for example, ancient grains such as buckwheat are widely used in many classical cuisines, making some local specialties ideal for gluten-intolerant people), so you can make the right choices.

When at a restaurant, don't hesitate to ask for dishes to be modified, dressed or prepared differently; this is probably easiest when the kitchen is not too busy so you may want to consider eating at non-peak times. Choose meat items that are grilled, baked, roasted or poached, and dishes that are steamed, grilled over fried or sautéed, opt for more vegetables and request for dressing and other accompaniments to be served on the side.

Be tech savvy

Getting a local dining and restaurant app on your phone is very helpful to seek out places with a healthy menu. Or, just use review sites to look up restaurants and view the menu so take a look at it ahead of time to see what's available.

Balance the buffets

Big hotel breakfast buffets are often the downfall of many a healthy eating resolution, so make sure you don't fall victim to the tempting arrays of pastries and fresh fry-ups. Be choosy, have lots of fruit, and don't go overboard every single morning. At all buffets, it's a good idea to use smaller plates – it's an easy way to watch your portions. And, don't skip the salad bar - filling up on veggies at the start will ensure you eat less of the unhealthy stuff.

Neha Jamani is a therapeutic chef who offers menu consultations, private events and classes. Find out more from thesacredkitchen.org.

SNACK IDEAS WHEN TRAVELLING

Nut butters	Great to snack on with fresh fruits or vegetables. If you have an allergy or intolerance to dairy, you can also make quick nut milk at breakfast time by mixing one tablespoon nut butter in one cup of water.
Granola	Skip the commercial breakfast cereals at the hotels and opt for a more nutrient-dense granola option; it also makes for a great snack.
Dried fruit and nuts	Always a good option, easily transportable and keeps well at room temperature.
Fruits	Apples banana, citrus fruit, unripe avocados keep well for a couple of days. You can also make yourself a simple delicious meal using mashed avocados over toast seasoned with a little salt and pepper.
Meat jerky	if you are not a vegetarian, jerky is the ultimate travel food. Since ancient times in many cultures, dried meat was one of the primary sources of nutrition when travelling. Just try and find a brand that isn't full of processed ingredients.
Health food bars	Choose one with minimally processed ingredients, or if you have extra time on hand, make your own before you travel.
Superfood sprinkles	Chia seeds, flax seeds, bee pollen, goji berries make a nice addition to a bowl of fruit and yoghurt.
Green powders	There are a number of good individual and blended green powders in the market. Carry some along and add it to juice, it's an excellent way to get extra vitamins and minerals.
Herbal teas	If you are someone who doesn't like the taste of water, drinking herbal teas is good way to ensure you stay hydrated.
Dark chocolate	If you have a sweet tooth, pack some dark chocolate Ñ it will help you resist tucking in the first sweet treat you see.

TRAVEL TECH

Clever gadgets to make eating on the go a simple, stress-free affair.



MESS-FREE EGGS

Love eggs for breakfast? This Egg Rollie is about to become a travel essential for those self-catering holidays. Just crack open an egg, whisk it, and pour it into the Egg rollie. The cylindrical non-stick cooking surface has a heating element to make fluffy eggs – which pops up in minutes. You can also use it for cinnamon rollies, and burritos. ***Dhs95 from citrusstv.com.***

STORE IT RIGHT

Don't worry about your food getting spoilt on your road trip, as long as you have this mini-fridge at hand. The Nomad CC4 Catering Container keeps your food and drinks hot and cold in each of the insulated containers, with a convenient front-loading facility. The box has a menu card holder as well, so you can mark down exactly what you put inside, instead of opening it multiple times. ***Dhs1,770 (plus shipping) from coolicebox.com.***





TOUCH OF A BUTTON

Canned foods are a staple of travel diets. This battery-operated Culinaire One Touch can opener allows you to effortlessly open a can with just the push of a button. While opening the tin, it also makes sure to smoothen out the edges so that you don't risk hurting yourself. ***Dhs82 at Lakeland.***

ONE POT WONDER

The Power Practical's PowerPot 5 is the ultimate gadget for those summer camping holidays. Make soup, heat up pasta, or cook a dish on the spot, and charge your phone simultaneously – how nifty! The 1.4 litre cooking pot has a flame-resistant cable which you can connect to a USB port to charge, and comes with a bowl, lid, cup, and mesh storage bag. The pot converts heat to electricity, to power up other gadgets as well. ***Dhs548 (plus shipping), from powerpractical.com.***



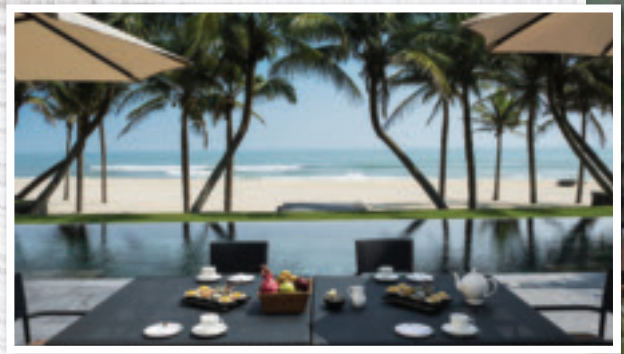


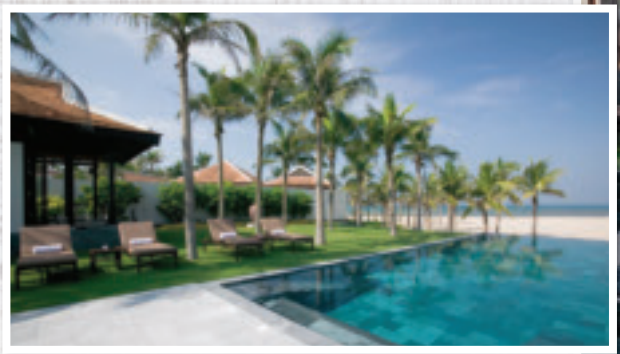
COFFEE ON THE MOVE

Get your daily caffeine fix with this handheld Wacaco Minispresso, which makes barista-style coffee in a jiffy. The sleek, compact gadget looks like a small thermos, and comprises of a scoop (also doubles as a tamper), water tank, pumping system, and cup. All you need to do is add 70ml of hot water, and coffee, and pump the mixture by hand to make your espresso. The extracted coffee is similar to conventional coffee machine espressos, and cleaning it is even easier than making a coffee – just run it under a tap! ***Dhs65 from wacaco.com.***

Text NICOLA MONTEATH | Photographs SUPPLIED

Travel Special competition







Explore Vietnam with a complimentary two-night stay for two at The Nam Hai in Hoi An, including breakfast and a cookery course, courtesy of Lightfoot Travel.

Situated in the picturesque town of Hoi An, The Nam Hai personifies the understated charm and magnificent culture of Vietnam's Central Coast. This award-winning luxury resort features 60 beautiful one-bedroom villas and 40 pool villas resting on a tranquil 1km stretch of the pristine China Beach. Each occupies its own section of landscaped gardens and boasts views of the South China Sea and nearby Cham Islands. Resort amenities include gourmet restaurants, multiple swimming pools, a clubhouse, a tropical spa and extensive recreational facilities.

One lucky winner is in with the chance of snapping up a luxury two-night stay at The Nam Hai, including breakfast, plus an exciting cookery course for two, which will allow them to delve into the world of Vietnamese cuisine.

Scan this QR code to go straight to our website.

Log on to bbcgoodfoodme.com
to enter this competition and simply answer this question:

On which continent is Vietnam located?

*Terms & conditions apply. Flights are not included in this prize. Employees of CPI Media Group are not eligible to enter. Winners will be selected on random basis from correct entries.



ROME *underground*

No, we're not talking about digging up ancient archeological ruins, but rather uncovering hidden culinary gems. Here are some insider secrets of Rome that every foodie should know about. By Sudeshna Ghosh.

Colosseum

Of course you must visit the Colosseum, Vatican city, St Peter's Basilica, the Pantheon and the dozens of other historical treasures that Rome, one of the world's greatest cities, has to offer – where else will you find two and a half millennia's worth of culture architecture and heritage? And history truly is everywhere in this city, wherever you go along its labyrinthine 'vias' – some of the world's most iconic structures are set so you can just turn a corner from a piazza and have your breath taken away as it looms in front. But the Eternal City's long, rich, chequered history lies not only in its buildings spread over its undulating hilly suburbs, but a living breathing history is alive in its culinary culture. Here are some ways to experience them:

The food tour

Food tours are aplenty in Italy, but for one that really takes you off the beaten track and under the skin of Rome, the Taste of Rome bespoke tours are perfect. A friendly guide customises the tour according to preference, but typically it can start with a visit to Eustachio, a historic coffee bar dating back to the 1950s, which is frequented by politicans for coffee breaks (it is located near the Pantheon); in Rome, coffee isn't a leisurely affair, but rather something quick that regularly punctuates the day. Locals claim it is the best coffee in Rome, and I couldn't disagree, having tried the creamy coffee served in warm cups in the tiny, quick-service space. I was next taken to Nonna Vincenza, a pastry shop, where you can find the best cannolis in all of Rome – again, a tall claim, but not unfounded. Tucked away as most of these places are, with nondescript signage in historic buildings, they would be hard to find without an in-the-know guide on hand.

From here, my next stop was the Campo de' Fiori market – set in a square in the heart of the Old Town, Rome's best known food market is open every morning, with fresh, seasonal produce

Photographs SUPPLIED; SUDESHNA GHOSH


The atmospheric alleys of the old town are full of history



Rome's favourite coffee shop


The Campo de' Fiori market


Rome's skyline is dotted with historic buildings


Fresh produce and local specialties at the market


Daniela grows her own herbs and uses them in her cooking classes


Roscioli is a gourmet haven, perfect for cheese lovers



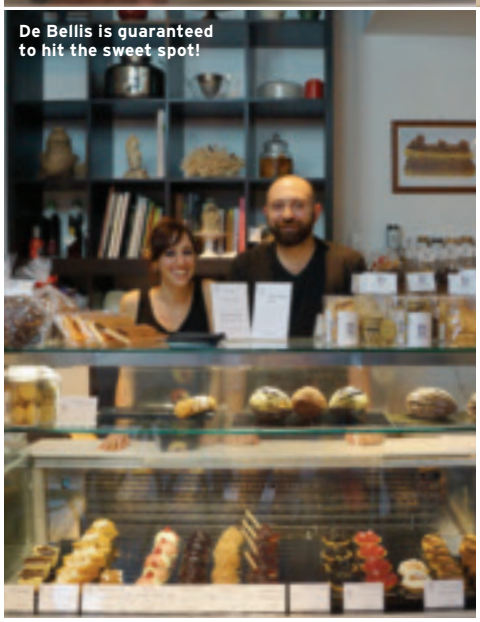
Emma pizzeria is an insider secret of Rome residents



Alfonso Iaccarino is the face behind Viva Voce restaurant



Chef Claudio Gargali serves up some of the best food available in the vicinity of the Pantheon



De Bellis is guaranteed to hit the sweet spot!

DID YOU KNOW?

A lot of what we know as traditional Roman cuisine today is poor people's or farmers' food. In renaissance Rome, with most of the good cuts of meat going to the wealthy aristocracy, the Vatican clergy and the bourgeoisie, the commoner had to make do with the quinto-quarto, or the fifth quarter, which basically means offal. As such, a variety of creative recipes with intestines and off-cuts have come to become part of the cuisine, whether it's in pajata (intestines) or a typical Roman pasta dish, pasta amitriciana (with cured pork jowl, tomato and cheese). This is also the reason that traditionally, people didn't eat a lot of meat or fish, but ate a lot of vegetables and legumes.

on offer, as well as cured meats, homemade products such as oils and sauces, and lots more.

Having worked up an appetite, we then headed to Il Pastaio di Roma, on Via de Coronari, a tiny specialty pasta bar. A firm favourite with locals, they churn out a small selection of fresh, homemade pastas with classic sauces such as carbonara (a Roman specialty) in plastic plates and forks – who needs fine china when you have such beautiful, silky pasta just waiting to be devoured?! Conveniently, right next door is one of Rome's best known gelato outlets, Gelateria del Teatro ai Coronari, where you can try creative flavours such as white chocolate with basil and rosemary-sage, to name just two – they come up with innovative new creations all the time. The tour can also incude a visit to Rome's renowned Jewish ghetto district, where I tried unique delicacies like artichoke pizza, while taking in the history. This tour lasts about three hours, but others can include everything from trips to the Porta Portese market in the trendy Trastevere district, to wine tastings.

Taste of Rome tours from Roma Si are offered on a private booking basis, prices start from €300 (around Dhs1,200) for two. visit www.romasi.it.

The gourmet dining experience

While it isn't typical to head to a hotel restaurant for a nice meal in Europe, when there is good food available aplenty at casual roadside restaurants, Viva Voce restaurant at the Gran Melia Aggripina is worth making an exception for. Headed up by Michelin star chef Alfonso Iaccarino, the restaurant serves up a Mediterranean menu inspired by his southern Italian roots (think, plenty of seafood). Home-style family recipes are elevated to haute cuisine in a seasonally changing menu showcasing organic and local produce. In the chic, stylish modern art deco setting, expect dishes like sea red king prawn stuffed with Provolone cheese, chicory sprouts and horseradish with passion fruit sauce; Pontelandolfo potato dumpling stuffed with scamorza from Lucania cheese on lemon scented tomato sauce (the lemons from Alfonso Iaccarino's own farm) and fillet of red sea bream with spring vegetables, fresh tomato and basil broth, plus an array of homemade pastas. With an enviable wine list to accompany, a meal here is sure to be one of Rome's finest.

www.ristorantevivavoce.com.

The cooking class

Daniela del Balzo is a friendly, twinkle-eyed modern day version of an Italian nonna who swapped a high-powered corporate career to pursue her passion for food with tailored cooking classes at her home in the posh, leafy suburb of Aventine Hill. Having developed a passion for food from her mother and grandmother, she honed her skills at renowned culinary schools Gambero Rosso and Le Cordon Bleu, so you know you'll be in good hands. Her classes are intimate, with never more than six to eight people, and are customised to what each group wants. The day can start with a trip to the nearby Testaccio market to source fresh produce, where she also gets to know her class better and decide the menu depending on what everyone wants, and what is available, followed by hands-on cooking in her light, airy kitchen. Typically, a class consists of a five-course menu – my highlight was learning one of Rome's specialties, the saltimbocca, which I've loved for a long time – which is then enjoyed by everyone around her dining table. You also get a certificate at the end of the class! But the paperwork is not what you should be booking into this for, it's the opportunity to get an inside look into life in Rome, and learn about Roman and indeed Italian regional cuisine from an expert.

Classes are priced from €180 per person, visit danielascookingschool.com.

The pizza place

No trip to Italy is complete without pizza, and for some of the best pizza in Rome, you need look no further than Emma ristorante and pizzeria, tucked away in one of the narrow back lanes of the old town. The canopied outdoor seating area, like most other restaurants in Europe, is inviting, but meant to attract the tourist crowds – the in-the-know locals head straight indoors into the smart,

inside bit, where exposed brick walls, white furniture and funky lights come together to create a modern, industrial warehouse-style vibe. The pizzeria menu offers delicious freshly made pizzas made with artisanal dough which come in a variety of styles, ranging from the traditional margharita to the creative buffalo mozzarella, Scottish salmon and wild fennel pizza. If, however, you are in the mood for something different, the kitchen menu offers a selection of innovative, ingredient-led Italian dishes. *www.emmapizzeria.com*

The shopping spree

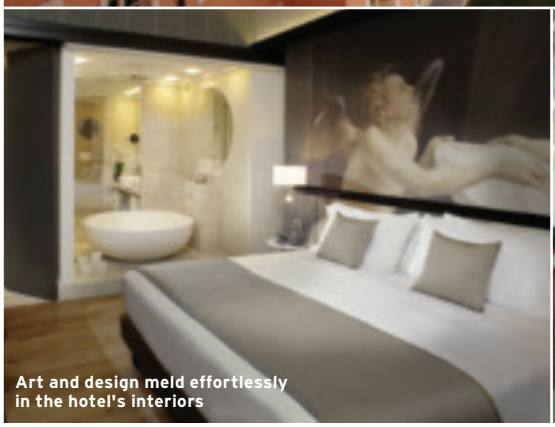
Fortunately, many of Rome's foodie attractions are located in the old town area, popular with tourists, which means a meander around the atmospheric alleys will lead you to stumble upon gems like De Bellis pasticceria, a pastry shop offering delectable French-inspired creations from celebrity patissier Andrea de Bellis – a box of their eclectic treats make for great gifts. Another must-visit for foodie shopping is Roscioli, a well-known cheese place where you can sample and shop for everything from burrata to Rome specialty Pecorino Romano. They also have a nearby deli where you will find cured meats, dried pastas and more aged cheeses. Cheese fiends should also not miss Beppe E I Suoi Formaggi, a hole-in-the-wall tasting and shopping destination for fabulous artisanal cheeses. *www.andreadebellis.it; www.salumeriaroscioli.com; www.beppeeisuoiformaggi.it.*

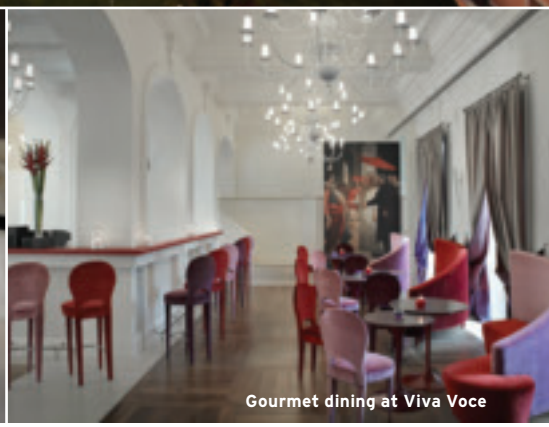
The sightseeing pit-stop

It's an accepted fact that restaurants near popular attractions are usually tourist traps offering overpriced, sub-standard food. But, sometimes, after hours of pavement pounding, one has no choice but to settle for whatever is available. Luckily, there is one restaurant that combines a tourist-friendly location with fantastic food – Armando al Pantheon, located, as the name suggests, within spitting distance of the Pantheon, has been serving up classical Roman dishes using seasonal ingredients, in a cosy trattoria ambience, since 1961. Highlights of the menu such as Roman-style grilled bread with butter and anchovies, cold cuts sourced from the region, tripe in Roman style with cheese and tomatoes, spelt soups and dumplings, and traditional Roman cakes, well represent how Roman cuisine has developed.

Chef Claudio Gargali, a smiling, effusive character who speaks little English, but has carved out a name for himself amongst Rome's foodies, ensures that with reliably good traditional food at good-value prices, the restaurant is always packed with tourists and locals alike. *www.armandoalpantheon.it.*


The Gran Melia Villa Agrippina is set amidst landscaped gardens


Art and design meld effortlessly in the hotel's interiors


Gourmet dining at Viva Voce

The hotel

Housed in a former monastery and orphanage, the luxurious Gran Melia Villa Agrippina is rightfully described as an urban resort. Although it is located close to all the action, just across the bridge from the old town area over the Tiber river and minutes away from Vatican City, on the Juanculo hilltop, it still manages to feel like a serene retreat boasting views over the city. Set amidst landscaped gardens, the hotel is as much a happy marriage between historic and contemporary – think museum-style clear plastic scaffolds juxtaposed against the 19th century architecture – as it is between a trendy boutique hotel vibe and classical five star luxury. A soothing minimalist design scheme dominated by white, and accented by pops of colour – including Spanish brand Melia's signature red – pervades the entire hotel, from the lobby areas to the luxuriously appointed rooms, with art infusing the space in murals and canvases.

Booking in as a Red Level guest (their premium floor) can get you privileges such as private check-in with a prosecco welcome drink, personalised butler service, Clarins amenities in-room, plus breakfast, all-day snacks, and complimentary cocktails and canapés in the Red Level lounge. Home to the aforementioned Viva Voce restaurant, the hotel also offers the option of cocktails at the lovely Liquid Garden lounge located by the poolside, or afternoon tea at the elegant Library, an inviting space that is all plush sofas with coffee table books and great views. *Room rates start from €395, visit melia.com.*

TRAVEL DIARY

GETTING THERE Emirates offers three direct daily flights to Rome, with some flights on an A380 jet. In business class, enjoy flatbed seats, gourmet meals and exclusive lounge access at both ends, for the six-hour journey to comfortably fly past (no pun untended!). Ticket prices start from Dhs3,475 in economy class, and from Dhs15,675 in business, visit emirates.com.



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British seaside escapes *for foodies*

Traveling to the UK this summer? Don't miss these food lovers' havens!



SPLENDID SEAFOOD

at Gairloch, north-west Scotland

Ever since Victorian days, Gairloch has been a renowned holiday resort, with fine sandy beaches, stunning scenery and year-round tranquillity. Nowadays the lure of splendid and affordable food has become an added attraction, making this a true slice of foodie heaven.

The beach is still a good place to start. Within the past year, Gairloch and four nearby beaches have been awarded flags for best beach. So as you drag your picnic hamper down over the stretch of sand, it is good to know that you are on one of the cleanest beaches in the land.

Once you tire of sand-castle digging, walk down to the harbour. This is where Victorian visitors arrived by steamer; now there is a ferry service from here to Portree on Skye during the summer. You can also take a sea-angling or wildlife-watching trip from here.

One of the best inns in north-west Scotland – for its friendly welcome and superb, local food – is award-winning The Old Inn in Gairloch. Try Loch Ewe scallops – the most delicious imaginable. The Old Inn also serves a superb 'Seafood kettle' with local langoustines, skate, squat lobsters and mussels with aïoli. Or try the home-smoked halibut with rocket salad.

Take the stunning drive from Gairloch over the Pass of the Cattle to Applecross. Here you can sit on the beach with a glass of wine from The Applecross Inn, looking over to the island of Raasay, as you order one of their memorable prawn sandwiches. As you drive home ready for dinner, you could opt for butcher Kenny Morrison's wild venison sausages barbecued on the beach – remember, northern Scotland has long hours of daylight. Then, if you are feeling thirsty, take a short drive over the hills to the Drumchork Lodge Hotel in Aultbea – where you can find over 500 single malts.

And if you feel you need to work up an appetite for all the specialities of the area, Gairloch also offers falconry, a heritage museum, and pony-trekking as well as an excellent nine-hole golf course overlooking the sea. >>



Halibut with rocket salad

BUY THE BEST



The Whitstable Shellfish Company (*whitstableoystercompany.com*) offers rock oysters from the west coast of Scotland.

Photographs SHUTTERSTOCK





ENCHANTING ISLE

in Yarmouth, Isle of Wight

This tiny fishing and yacht port – the island's oldest town – retains its 16th-century appearance with its castle built in 1547. Surrounded by water, Yarmouth is the place to watch the boats go by over sundowners of the island's excellent wine.

A five-minute signed walk leads to Sandhard beach, in a nature reserve with barbecue facilities – grill the lobster or sea bass you've bought fresh from boats on the quay. Shop for goodies in town – Hopkins in the High Street and Wavells in James Street sell fish, groceries, fresh local produce and wines; Angela's Deli in Quay Street has a delicious selection of homemade picnic treats. If you want crab then go to Bembridge on the east coast – Best Dressed Crab in Town offers fresh cooked crab and lobster direct from the owner's boat. While in Bembridge, visit Island Mustards whose Victorian recipes include whisky, ginger, orange, Wight wine flavours, plus jams and preserves, herb jellies, 'hellish relish' and chutneys.

From Yarmouth, explore the island by car or bike. Discover the range of produce from wines and ciders to garlic, asparagus, tomatoes on the vine, bacon and dairy produce. The Garlic Farm at Newchurch will sell you everything to spice up your picnic and your kitchen, from garlic (of course) to pickles, chutneys and garlic bread made from flour from Calbourne Water Mill.

Minghella's Luxury Ice Cream at Wootton Bridge is worth a visit. It's run by the parents of film director Anthony and sells award-winning ice creams, including Piña Colada and Crème brûlée. At Adgestone Vineyard, there are vineyard tours, free wine tastings, a café, and a gift shop. At Rosemary Vineyard, there are self-guided trails, wine talks and free tastings, as well as a café, all in 30 acres. After a busy day, dine at The George, a 17th-century townhouse on Yarmouth seafront owned by Amy Willcock of Aga fame. Seaview Restaurant in Seaview lives up to its name, and is popular with yachties and celebs. If you prefer a pub, then the Red Lion, at Freshwater, offers fish pie and fishcakes. The Wight Mouse Inn, at Chale, offers 365 different whiskies.

FEAST IN THE EAST

in Brancaster Staithe, north Norfolk

There's a place on the northern curve of East Anglia where sky and sea merge into the horizon of a vast and empty beach; where salt marshes reach crooked fingers out towards the North Sea; where migrant birds settle for a season or two. On this already significant and ancient spot, the Romans constructed a fort, at the harbour they knew as Brandonum – now called Brancaster Staithe.

Today, the Staithe is a bustling place. A narrow twisting channel snakes through the salt marsh, among bullrushes and grey-green marram grass; long, incoming tides fill the creeks for people in little boats to row, to sail, to picnic and




Samphire is a seasonal specialty

to fish. And when the catch is abundant, it will probably go to The Fish Shed on the coast road, where Margaret and Stephen Bocking preside over their pescatorial paradise.

Delicious local mussels give way to crabs and lobsters in summer, vying for attention with every kind of fish, caught by longshoremen and trawlers off the coast or brought in from the beach by local lads.

Just across the road is The White Horse, an excellent pub with views over the marshes, whose new chef is the enthusiastic young Nicholas Parker. His cooking is superb, but it is rivalled by the adventurous Eric Snaith, a few miles down the road at the elegant Titchwell Manor, and by Andy Bruce, fresh from Odette's in London and now at The Gin Trap in Ringstead. Ten minutes away from Brancaster Staithe, The Victoria, at Holkham, sends restaurant critics into an ecstasy of delight, while at the smart little town of Burnham Market you could happily fall into the Hoste Arms.

Grooms Bakery produces a different speciality every day of the week while Humble Pie, a tiny delicatessen, is a treasure trove offering lovely local cheeses. In season, succulent samphire is sold for a song all along this coast road, which is also dotted with market gardens, pick-your-owns and a farm shop.

Although people and sophistication are coming in faster than the tide, this is a broadly generous and accommodating place where you can still feel completely alone and at ease under enormous skies.


Fishguard bay

WELSH WONDERS
in Fishguard, west Wales

The herring boats have long gone from the pretty harbour of Fishguard, but you can still see the remnants of the fishing industry on which this Pembrokeshire town's prosperity was based.

Individual inshore fishermen still bring in lobsters and crabs and the quayside is often strewn with their pots, but unless you are there at just the right moment, the only place in town you can still buy locally caught fresh fish is from Peter and Beverley Hughes, the High Street butchers (hughesbutcherstclears.co.uk). While there, shop for honey, chutneys, farm-produced cheeses like Llangloffan, and cooked lamb, 'pickled' using an old recipe that makes it less fatty. And try Peter's award-winning sausages: he makes 46 different varieties.

At Castle Morris, Leon and Joan Downey run Llangloffan Farmhouse Cheese Centre (welshcheese.co.uk). Their daughter Emma Lewis runs Tides Restaurant & Coffee Shop where she uses their traditional farmhouse cheese as well as shellfish caught by her husband. Dishes include organic Welsh Black beef and chilli jam, and seared Cardigan Bay scallops with soya and honey.

Fish is also strongly featured at Cnapan in Newport and decent crab sandwiches, plus well-kept beer, may be found at The Sloop Inn, Porthgain beside the picturesque old harbour from where slate used to be shipped. Almost next door, The Shed Tea Room offers a good selection of homemade cakes, cream teas, crab sandwiches and salads. And in the evening it becomes a wine bar and bistro with Caroline Jones making the best use of her fisherman husband's catch. Dishes include warm Porthgain crab with pink grapefruit and mustard dressing or Fillet of gurnard with saffron and potato broth.

For sweet treats, try a cream tea with local Drim Farm clotted cream, homebaked scones and Sharon's Kitchen jams a short stroll from the harbour. Or visit the Oriel-Y Felin gallery and tea room, Trefin. They have great local clotted cream teas, with homemade jam, plus Welsh black beef from their own Ty Dewi herd as well as crab sandwiches.

Inspiring Istanbul

With one foot in Asia and the other in Europe, Turkey offers travellers the best of both worlds. Ujala Ali Khan travels to Istanbul to discover its varied offerings.



The Blue Mosque



Istiklal street is a pedestrian-only hub popular with tourists and locals alike

Istanbul is so lovely it will give you the goose bumps," said a friend when she learned I was about to go there for the first time. By far the most popular destination in Turkey, this unique city straddles Europe and Asia not just geographically, but culturally too. As your plane touches down, the first view you have is of the minaret-dotted horizon. You will find yourself instantly enamoured by the bustling metropolis with its quaint street bazaars and glorious museums. Choose your preferred mode of relaxation – haggling over souvenirs at the Grand Bazaar or cruising down the Bosphorous in a ferry. Your days will be filled with sights to see, and your nights can easily be a frenzy of sampling the best of the local cuisine and toe-tapping to Turkish beats, offering an unforgettable insight into the country's rich culture.

Must-see sights

A stay in Istanbul would not be complete without a visit to The Blue Mosque, Hagia Sofia Museum, The Grand Bazaar and Topkapi Palace. You don't have to go very far to get your dose of history and culture in this town – most of the major attractions are walking distance from each other, and anything further out is an easy tram ride away.

The Sultanahmet mosque, built between 1609 and 1616 for Ahmet I, should not be missed. Present inside the mosque are the mausoleums of Ahmet I, founder of the mosque, and Ottoman emperors Osman II and Murat IV. Right outside the Blue Mosque is the Egyptian Obelisk, which was brought to Istanbul (then Constaninopolis) in 390 AD by the Byzantine emperor Theodosius I. It was originally erected by Tutmosis III, before the temple of Karnak at Heliopolis.

Photographs SUPPLIED; SUDESHNA GHOSH

The Topkapi Palace Museum, which was built by Mehmet II not long after the conquest of Istanbul, is a nice place to get a historical perspective on the city. The palace housed lodges, pavilions, state offices, barracks, libraries, a mosque, kitchens and the harem. The Harem alone contained more than 250 rooms. Today, it houses museum exhibits, the most popular of which are the Portraits of the Sultans, the Ottoman Costumes and the Religious displays.

If you have time, squeeze in a half-day tour of the Prince's Islands by ferry, stopping at Buyukada (Big Island), the biggest among the Prince's Islands (which get their name from the Byzantine princes who used to spend their holidays there) dotting the Marmara Sea.

A cruise down the Bosphorous, the straits of which mark the Asian-European divide of not just the city, but also of the country, is a great way to spend a lazy afternoon. The cruise will give you the chance to see a number of historical sights at a distance, including Dolmabahce palace, Beylerbeyi palace and the fortresses of Rumeli and Anadolu. Famous for having been built in a mere four months, the Rumeli Fortress was built by Mehmet II. The fortress houses a mosque, a fountain, cistern, cellars, stores and barracks for the army. On the opposite side of the Bosphorous, right across from the Rumeli, is the Anadolu Fortress. Between the two, the Ottomans had the total control of the Bosphorous that they were looking for.

As much a tourist sight, with its dazzling display of colourful wares set in labyrinthine alleys, as a retail haven, don't miss out Istanbul's Grand Bazaar. With its 3,000 shops, it is the largest covered bazaar in Turkey. The shops sell everything from crystal and silver to rugs and pashminas.

Must-eat bites

Whether it's culture vultures or shopaholics, there is something for everyone, so why should gourmands be left behind? In fact, delicious Turkish staples – be it scrumptious kababs served with rich sauces or Turkish-style pizzas – mean that Turkey, and particularly Istanbul, is a real foodie's dream come true.

Istanbul's famed Istiklal street, lined with shops and eateries, is a safe bet for a spot of Turkish cuisine. From fast-food style joints such as the Marmara Café, to veritable institutions such as Saray Muhallebicisi (which has been around since 1935) authentic cuisine from either end of the spectrum is on offer. Don't miss the *Iskender Kebap*, a Turkish classic, both at Maramara café and at Saray Muhallebicisi – reflecting how each restaurant and cook gives this dish their own spin, the difference in preparation and presentation is obvious, but both were delicious in their own right.

Another Turkish staple you cannot leave the city without sampling is *Lahmachun* – a thin bread with a layer of tomato paste and spiced, minced meat, *Lahmachun* is served with lemon and chopped parsley on the side. Easily available at most street side stalls or cafés, the Turkish way to eat it is to squeeze on the lemon, sprinkle on the parsley, roll it up, and enjoy.

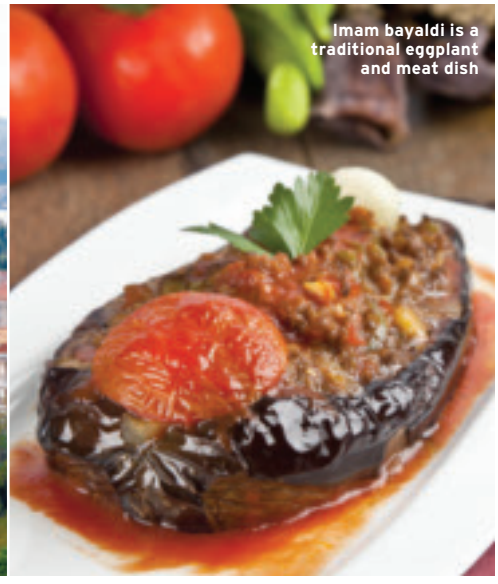
On Guneslibahce Sokak (Sunny Garden Street), near Kadikoy's fish market, with a few basic tables and chairs set up in the shade and plenty more seating inside, is Ciya Sofrasi – where you can find Istanbul's finest home-style southeastern and Anatolian cuisine. The man behind Ciya is Musa Dagdeviren, who hails from Southern Turkey, and is committed to reviving authentic, traditional cuisines that are rapidly disappearing. Most of the cuisine at Ciya hails from Turkey's Gaziantep region, which is slightly different from the cuisine of Turkey at large, due to the influences from Oguz Turks, and its vicinity to Aleppo, which gives it an Arabic influence. The laid-back, relaxed vibe, the lack of printed menus, the glass-fronted open kitchen, which produced – among other things – a steady stream of doner kebabs plump with juicy slivers of meat, make this an ideal pit stop for a busy, touristy day. After a mezze spread including muhammara (tomato spread with ground walnuts), hummous (which needs no introduction, of course!), *barbunya pilaki* (beans cooked in tomato paste), *cacik* (yogurt with cucumber and dried mint, often referrred to as Turkey's national dish), various *salatasi* (salads) including *patilcan salatasi* (eggplant salad), and soups with lentils and bulghur, you may be full, but leave room for the mains. Apart from Turkish mainstays such as kebabs and yoghurt-based curries, don't miss unique delicacies like the Gaziantep specialty of stewed tender veal meatballs with morello cherries, a juicy and tangy creation.

Right next to the medieval Rumelihisari fortress, on a Bosphorous boat dock dating back to the Ottoman era, is the fish house Rumelihisari Iskele, which is venerated as one of the best in the city, if not the country. The salt-crusted fish is a must-try, as are the *imam bayaldi* (puréed aubergine with grilled lamb and tomato sauce) and *borek* (spiced ground meat and pine nuts).

These are but just a few nuggets of the culinary delights on offer in Istanbul. The charms of Byzantine architecture, the wit of Turkish carpet-sellers, the fading glory of Roman ruins, the warm hospitality of the Turks, and the delicious flavours – yes, everything about Istanbul will not only give you goosebumps, but will make you want to go back!



Bosphorus bridge



Imam bayaldi is a traditional eggplant and meat dish

TRAVEL DIARY

GETTING THERE

Emirates Airlines (emirates.com) and Turkish Airlines (turkishairlines.com) offer direct daily flights to Istanbul, tickets from around Dhs1,800.

STAYING THERE

A variety of hotels are dotted around the city, to suit all budgets. The World Heritage Hotel, in Sultanahmet Square is a convenient option located close to all the action. Room rates start from around Dhs2,000 per night, www.worldheritagehotel.com.

A cheese-tastic evening!

Our latest Food Club event last month saw chef and cookbook author Suzanne Husseini demonstrate a cheese board and canapés using Castello Cheese, at Lafayette Gourmet. Lucky members went home not only with lots of culinary tips and ideas, but also goodie bags packed with creamy Havarti cheese from Castello, and vouchers from Lafayette Gourmet.



Suzanne Husseini was the star of the evening



Suzanne showed the audience how to create the ideal cheese board



Our Food Club members were eager to learn as always



It was an informative and fun-filled workshop



Everyone got to try the delicious canapes



The audience picked up some top tips for cheese pairings



Youssef from Castello hands over a hamper to a lucky raffle draw winner

Photographs MAKSYM PORIECHKIN







THE ULTIMATE CHEESE BOARD

Suzanne's tips for putting together a stunning cheeseboad to impress.

- **Add a touch of green:** Instead of placing the cheeses directly to the cutting board, place a little bed of greens first, you can use leaves such as grape vine, fig or even lettuce. This makes your cheese platter look fuller and more attractive.

- **Never serve it cold:** Pull your cheese out of the refrigerator at least an hour and a half before serving it. Bringing it to room temperature ensures that you get the natural flavours and fragrance of the cheese

- **Quality not quantity:** Choose only three to four kinds of cheese with different flavours and textures for your platter.

- **Avoid cluttering the plate:** Create different levels with the cheese by cutting them in different sizes. Do not scatter the nuts all over the board, put them in a neat pile. Add one large bunch of green or red grapes in the center to create a visual focal point.

- **Add more fruits:** Aside from grapes, you can also use fruits like green apples, pears, apricot, and even dry figs to your cheese plate. The sweet and tangy tastes of these fruits balances that saltiness of the cheese. »

CHEESE CANAPÉ RECIPES



Watermelon and cheese skewers

SERVES 6 EASY

20 1-inch cubes of fresh watermelon
200g Havarti light cheese, cut into 1 inch cubes
20 fresh mint leaves
Rose water
20 toothpicks or mini forks

Skewer the watermelon cubes alternating with the cheese cubes. Add a mint leaf. Finish with a spritz of rose water before serving.



Mini Tacos with Jalapeño cheese

SERVES 6 EASY

4 flour tortillas
Olive oil
1 avocado
Juice of 1 lime
Salt, to taste
1 small shallot, finely diced
½ jalapeño pepper, de-seeded and finely chopped
2 tbsp sundried tomatoes, finely diced
200g Havarti jalapeños cheese, cut to small pieces

1 Using a round 2-inch cookie cutter, cut mini circles of the tortilla. Brush lightly with olive oil. Place a toothpick through the 2 ends to form a mini taco.
2 Bake in a preheated oven at 175C until they turn lightly golden. Remove when done and remove the toothpick when cooled.
3 Prepare the guacamole by peeling the avocado and mashing to a slightly chunky texture. Add lime juice, shallots , jalapeños and sundried tomato, season with salt.
4 Fill each taco with a little guacamole and place a piece of the Havarti cheese on top and serve.

Want to be a part of our next Food Club event? Then sign up for a Premium membership on bbcgoodfoodme.com to get priority confirmation. You can also like us on **facebook.com/bbcgoodfoodme** and follow us on **twitter.com/bbcgoodfoodme** to get all our latest updates and join the foodie conversation!



Warm dates with cheese

SERVES 6 EASY

10 majdool dates, pitted
10 toasted almonds
200g Havarti cheese, cut in 10 pieces
Honey, to taste
1 Slice the date in half, place 1 toasted almond, followed by a cube of cheese.
2 Place on a baking tray and put in the oven just to warm the dates and melt cheese slightly. Remove and lightly drizzle over with honey.



Crostini with tapenade and garlic cheese

SERVES 6 EASY

10 cherry tomatoes
Handful of fresh thyme
20 pieces mini crostinis
225g olive tapenade
200g Havarti wild garlic cheese

1 Cut the tomatoes in half and place on a shallow baking tray. Drizzle lightly with olive oil. Season with salt and pepper and fresh thyme, leaving some aside for garnish. Place in a preheated oven at 175C to slowly roast for 60 mins. Set aside.
2 Spread a small amount of tapenade on each crostini. Place a slice of roasted tomato on top and top with a slice of Havarti cheese. Garnish with a little fresh thyme. Serve immediately.


The weather was perfect for an alfresco weekend


Dinner in the sky was a highlight of the event

DOHA DINING

The Qatar International Food Festival recently took place at the Museum of Islamic Art Park. We take a look back at the annual event's sixth edition.


The on-stage entertainment showcased local culture


Live musicians added to the ambience

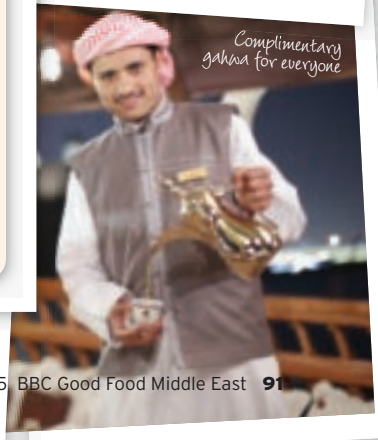
From March 24-28, Doha residents flocked to the spacious park set beside the renowned Museum of Islamic Art, to enjoy evenings packed with entertainment, cooking demonstrations from chef Aisha Al Tamimi and Kuwaiti chef Fawwaz Al Amim, and restaurant samplings. Highlights included the Live Cooking Theatre, and dining experiences like the BBQ Donut at sea, and Taste of Business class – a dinner held on a tabletop, pulled up by a crane in the sky – which offered dishes like miso cod and crusted lamb, created by celebrity chefs Nobu Matsuhisa and Vineet Bhatia. Culinary offerings from hotels like Grand Hyatt Dubai, included Thai dishes like fish cakes with sweet chilli sauce, while The Cellar at Oryx Rotana Doha offered cheese croquettes, beef pie, and churros, to name a few dishes. Hotels like Kempinski Marsa Malaz were also a part of the festival, and served a set menu, at a double-storey tent. And for those who were craving treats from casual dining restaurants, everything from Punjabi samosas to shawarma and crêpes were on offer. Here are some snapshots from the event.


Stunning firework displays marked the event each day


Guests enjoyed the food


A tasty treat

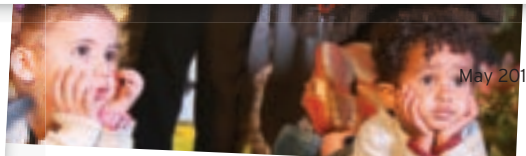

Dining on a donut was just one of the fun options


Complimentary gahwa for everyone



We're here!

BBC Good Food ME **was a media partner of the Qatar International Food Festival. Did we see you there?**



Photographs Supplied

The Challenge Continues

The second round of the Lurpak Cooking Challenge in association with *BBC Good Food ME* brought the talents of six more participants to the forefront.

Round two of the Lurpak Cooking Challenge in association with *BBC Good Food ME* took place on April 13 at McQueen's culinary school. The six contestants, part of a total tall of 12 finalists, were chosen after they sent through their original recipe to enter.

The competition required participants to use all the Mystery Box ingredients along with at least two Lurpak Cook's Range products (choosing from clarified ghee, cooking mist, butter blocks, cooking liquid, and baking butter) to cook up an original dish within 45 minutes. The judges chose the winners on the basis of taste, presentation, creativity and use of ingredients. While it was a close call, in the end, it came down to who put together the best, most thought-through dish.

The first round, which was held on March 15 saw two winners – Radina Stefanova and Stanislava Suskavcevic – who will compete with the two winners of the second round, Ritu Chaturvedi and Korena Herbert, to win the grand prize, an all-expenses paid trip for two to Denmark.

Take a look to see the action at the kitchen.

MYSTERY BOX INGREDIENTS

- CHICKEN FILLET
- SAGE
- EGGPLANT
- BRIE
- QUINOA





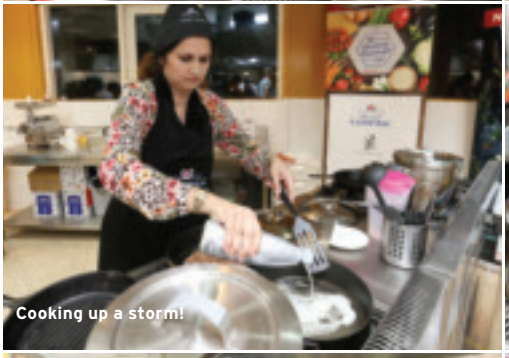
The six eager finalists



Opening the mystery box is always exciting



Assistant editor Nicola hosted the event



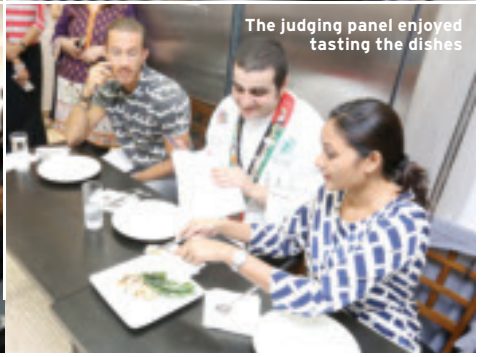
Cooking up a storm!



International flavours were showcased in the creations



The audience cheered the contestants along



The judging panel enjoyed tasting the dishes

Photographs by CHARLS THOMAS

MEET THE FINALISTS



Korena Herbert is a homemaker who loves cooking and baking. In her spare time, she loves party planning, with customise themes.



Naina Shakeb is a teacher at the Al Resalah School of Science Sharjah, and has made TV appearances on a Pakistani TV channel.



Geetha Adipathy is a cake decorator and baker with a Masters diploma in Sugar Arts. She also has her own Facebook page, Frosted Creations Dubai.



Hannah Joji is a passionate foodie who has founded a facebook group called Dubai Culinary Group.



Ritu Chaturvedi is a teacher and food blogger. The vegetarian cook loves cooking for her children.



Zoya Khalid is a student at Heriott Watt university, who loves cooking. She was the youngest participant!





EVENT HOSTED AT MCQUEENS CULINARY SCHOOL (04-3626133); MYSTERY BOX COURTESY OF LAFAYETTE GOURMET (04-3399933).

Competitions

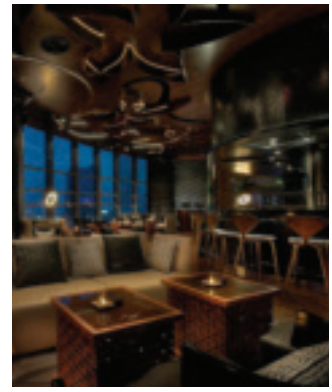
Fabulous prizes, from dining vouchers to hampers and cookbooks, up for grabs.

WIN! TWO SELAMLIQUE TURKISH COFFEE HAMPERS, WORTH DHS 2,000



Two winners can take home a lusciously-stocked Turkish coffee hamper by Selamlique. One hamper, worth Dhs 1,050, will comprise a Coffee Single Machine by Beko, 125g Cinnamon Coffee, 125g traditional coffee, 125g mastic delight, 125g cardamom coffee and 7 sachets of mastic coffee. The second hamper worth Dhs 950, contains 800g mixed delight, 190g pomegranate delight, 120g mixed delicacy, 250g Turkish coffee, 125g celebration Coffee, plus 1 cup and saucer.

WIN! DINNER FOR THREE AT MINT LEAF OF LONDON, WORTH DHS 1,500.



The winner of this prize can take two dining guests along with them to indulge in the fine Indian cuisine of Mint Leaf of London. Perched on the 15th floor of the Emirates Financial Towers in the heart of DIFC, Mint Leaf unveils a fine selection of traditional Indian cuisine with an innovative contemporary twist that promises a truly exceptional gastronomic experience.

WIN! A DINING VOUCHER FROM MAZINA, THE ADDRESS, DUBAI MARINA, WORTH DHS 500.



One winner and their guest will have the opportunity to experience Culinary Interactions, a new interactive dining experience. Engage with chefs as they conjure up delicious preparations across international cuisines, including Italian, Japanese, Arabic, Chinese and Thai.

WIN! BRUNCH FOR TWO AT CAFÉ BELGE, DIFC, WORTH DHS 450.



Treat yourself and a guest on a Friday or Saturday to Café Belge's authentic Belge Fest brunch, On a Soif! The three-course menu, which includes unlimited house beverages, serves delicious 'hoppertizers' and salads, followed by a lavish main course with roast chicken, veal sausages, short ribs, tiger prawns and steamed mussels. Desserts include a choice of waffles.

WIN! 5 COPIES OF THE *'COOKING AT HOME MADE EASY WITH SPINNEYS'* COOKBOOK, WORTH DHS 125 EACH.

Five lucky winners have the opportunity to win an exclusive copy each, of the *'Cooking at Home Made Easy with Spinneys'* cookbook. The book contains 50 quick and easy recipes, all made from ingredients easily available at any Spinneys supermarket.





WIN! AN ALL-YOU-CAN-EAT JAPANESE DINNER FOR FOUR AT IZAKAYA, JW MARRIOTT MARQUIS DUBAI, WORTH DHS 1,000.

One lucky winner can take along three friends to enjoy great food in a social environment at the stunning Japanese Izakaya restaurant in JW Marriott Marquis Dubai. Learn the art of socialising with sushi and enjoy an unlimited food experience at the Sushi bar, Robata grill station, and Teppanyaki table!



WIN! A SHOPPING VOUCHER FROM THE FARMER'S GARDEN, DUBAI, WORTH DHS 500.

One lucky winner will be able to discover the exclusive products of The Farmer's Garden and go on a shopping spree in one of their stores to give their pantry a gourmet makeover. Discover exclusive products unique to the region such as Carrot Jam from Casa Lucena, Organic Cola from Parker's Soft Drinks, So Delicious Dairy Free Products, 100% Cocoa Chocolate from Adoratio and lots more!

To stand a chance to win these prizes, visit our competitions page on www.bbcgoodfoodme.com, or simply scan this QR code with your mobile to go directly to the website, and answer the simple questions.

*Terms & conditions apply. Employees of CPI Media Group and entrants below 21 years old are not eligible to enter. Winners will be selected on random basis from correct entries.

Log on to
www.bbcgoodfoodme.com
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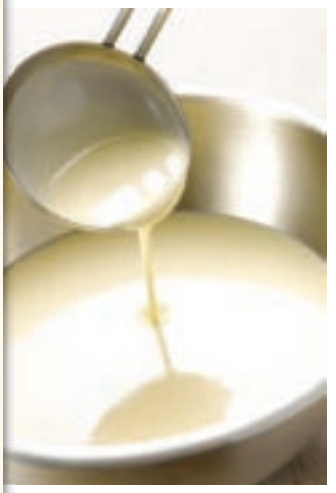
Feeding the **family** – safely

Dave Reeder, editor of Hospitality Business Middle East, warns about the dangers surrounding food hygiene, something that even professional chefs can slip up on!









Ask any group of friends which of them have had an upset stomach at some time in the last month and, almost inevitably, the majority present will admit that they have. Are food hygiene standards and regulations so bad here, then? If we take the case of Dubai, then no – food control regulations are amongst the most advanced in the world, although constant training of low paid kitchen staff continues to be a problem. Every restaurant now has to have a PIC (Person In Charge) who takes responsibility for food hygiene and follows strict procedures in the event of any incident.

But, considering that stomach upsets can be caused by anything you have eaten or drunk or come into contact with, in the previous 72 hours – which is why, in serious cases, it is vital to see a doctor straightaway - without suitable samples, food hygiene officers are almost helpless to act. Where do they start?

Take three recent cases, which have serious lessons for the home cook. The first saw a major salmonella outbreak in three different hotels, causing dozens of people to be hospitalised. As they were all staff, it was easy to pinpoint a staff meals as the cause, but all the usual salmonella suspects were tested and proved negative. Cross-checking ingredients used for the all three meals threw up no answer. In desperation, senior food control staff from the Dubai Municipality sat with the executive chefs and analysed the meals minutely. One common element emerged – mashed potato was served in all three hotels. Yet none of the key ingredients showed signs of salmonella infection. Finally, one of the chefs remembered one more ingredient – white pepper. A quick check of the other two kitchens showed all used the same brand. It tested positive for salmonella.

We're used to thinking of salmonella in terms of chicken, but the reality is that the bacteria can attach itself to hundreds of foods. With white pepper, the production process involves soaking black peppercorns in large tanks of water – an ideal breeding ground. The key take-away point in this story is that white pepper was added after cooking and so the bacteria were not destroyed. Washing alone does not help, so the same problem can arise with the addition of fresh herbs…

Another outbreak was traced to pancakes! Strangely, however, the stored batter was clear of infection and only some of the pancakes were infected. Close examination of the cooking process revealed that batter was taken from the fridge in batches and some of those batches were on the countertop longer than others, allowing bacteria to multiply. So, temperature control during the whole food preparation and cooking process is critical.

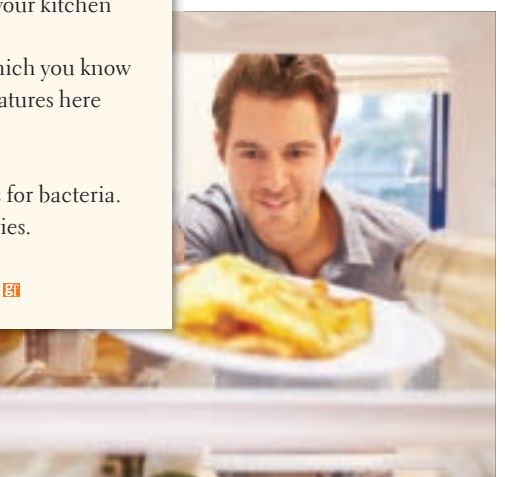
This was proved again in a major food hygiene incident on an evening dinner cruise. The high point of the dinner was chocolate mousse, which had been made under correct and hygienic circumstances in a hotel kitchen and then delivered to the boat in the late afternoon, before being served at 10.30pm. Trouble was, the mousse has merely been left on the counter in the on-board kitchen, which was warmer than ideal. The result, of course, was that bacteria from the raw eggs used in the mousse multiplied, till they were numerous enough to cause major health problems amongst the diners.

Apart from the obvious steps, such as keeping raw and cooked meat separate, regularly clearing out your fridge and so on, what lessons can you learn from these examples to improve the standard of food safety in your kitchen and ensure your family is safe? Here are my top tips:

- Simplest step is to date all food that enters your kitchen. You don't need to do it with fruit or veg which you know is fresh from look and feel, but things like leftovers stored in the fridge and so on. Ambient temperatures here mean food goes off quickly.
- Wash your hands frequently before and during food preparation and cooking.
- Kitchen towels should be changed on a daily basis in a busy kitchen – they are breeding grounds for bacteria.
- If any of your family has a bad case of upset stomach, store samples of food for the medical authorities.
- Don't put non-food items such as handbags or keys on kitchen counters where you prepare food.
- However much you love them, pets have no place on any surface where food is stored or prepared!









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